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THE WRITINGS

OF

GEORGE WASHINGTON.

VOL. IX.

THE

WRITINGS

OF

GEORGE WASHINGTON;

BEING HIS

CORRESPONDENCE, ADDRESSES, MESSAGES, AND OTHER PAPERS, OFFICIAL AND PRIVATE,

SELECTED AND PUBLISHED FROM THE ORIGINAL MANUSCRIPTS;

WITH

A LIFE OF THE AUTHOR,

NOTES, AND ILLUSTRATIONS.

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By JARED SPARKS.

VOLUME IX.

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1835.

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PART THIRD;

CONTAINING

CORRESPONDENCE

FROM THE TIME

OF RESIGNING HIS COMMISSION AS

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF OF THE ARMY,

TO THAT OF HIS INAUGURATION AS

PRESIDENT.

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PRIVATE LETTERS

AFTER THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION.

TO GOVERNOR CLINTON.

Mount Vernon, 28 December, 1783.

My dear Sir,

After as prosperous a journey as could be expected at this late season of the year, I arrived at my seat the day before Christmas, having previously divested myself of my official character. I am now a private citizen on the banks of the Potomac, where I should be happy to see you, if your public business would ever permit, and where, in the mean time, I shall fondly cherish the remembrance of all your former friendship.

Although I scarcely need tell you, how much I have been satisfied with every instance of your public conduct, yet I could not suffer Colonel Walker (whose merits are too well known to you to need a recommendation of him from me, if any thing should cast up favorable to his wishes,) to depart for New York, without giving your Excellency one more testimony of the obligations I consider myself under for the spirited and able assistance, which I have often derived from the State under your administration.

The scene is at last closed. I feel myself eased of a load of public care. I hope to spend the remainder

of my days in cultivating the affections of good men, and in the practice of the domestic virtues. Permit me still to consider you in the number of my friends, and to wish you every felicity.

Mrs. Washington joins me in presenting the compliments of the season, with our best respects, to Mrs. Clinton and the family. I have the honor to be, &c.

TO RICHARD VARICK.

Mount Vernon, 1 January, 1784.

DEAR SIR,

From the moment I left the city of New York, until my arrival at this place, I have been so much occupied by a variety of concerns, that I could not find leisure to acknowledge the receipt of your two favors of the 4th and 7th ultimo.

The public and other papers, which were committed to your charge, and the books in which they have been recorded under your inspection, having come safe to hand, I take this first opportunity of signifying my entire approbation of the manner in which you have executed the important duties of recording secretary, and the satisfaction I feel in having my papers so properly arranged, and so correctly recorded; and I beg you will accept my thanks for the care and attention, which you have given to this business. I am fully convinced, that neither the present age nor posterity will consider the time and labor, which have been employed in accomplishing it, unprofitably spent.

I beg you will be persuaded, that I shall take a pleasure in asserting on every occasion the sense I entertain of the fidelity, skill, and indefatigable industry manifested by you in the performance of your pub-

lic duties, and that I am, with sentiments of esteem and regard, dear Sir, &c.*

TO THE SUPERINTENDENT OF FINANCE.

Mount Vernon 4 January, 1784.

DEAR SIR,

Herewith I give you the trouble of receiving the account of my expenditures in Philadelphia, and on my journey home. If I recollect right, Colonel Cobb told me this was the mode you had suggested to him, as proper for my proceeding in this matter.

Equally unexpected by them, as it appeared just in my eye to do it, I have given my late aids, who attended me from the seat of my military command, one hundred dollars each to bear their expenses home. I could not think it reasonable, that, from their attachment to me, or from motives of etiquette, they should incur this charge themselves. Their finances, I well knew, were unable to bear it, although I had some difficulty to prevail on them to accept this aid. Cobb I would not suffer (on account of his domestic and other concerns) to proceed any further than Philadelphia with me, but his distance from thence home would be equal to that of the other gentlemen from this place.

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* In the month of May, 1781, General Washington made arrangements, by authority of Congress, to have all his official papers recorded in volumes. He appointed Colonel Richard Varick to superintend this work, to classify the papers according to a plan furnished by General Washington himself, and to engage such a number of copyists as he should deem expedient. It was an undertaking not less laborious than confidential and important. Colonel Varick was employed, with three or four assistants, two years and a half in executing it. The papers were not only classified and arranged with exactness of method, but were transcribed throughout in a fair, large, and distinct hand.

All stand, therefore, upon an equal footing in my allowance.

I cannot close this letter without a renewal of those sentiments of friendship and regard, which I have always felt and professed for you; nor without such expressions of my sensibility, as result from a susceptible mind, for the many instances of polite attention and civility, which I have received from Mrs. Morris and yourself, particularly during my late stay in Philadelphia. I flatter myself it is unnecessary to repeat the assurances of the pleasure it would give Mrs. Washington and me, to see you and Mrs. Morris at this retreat from my public cares; and yet, if I obey the dictates of my inclination and wishes, I must do it. My best wishes and respectful compliments, in which Mrs. Washington joins me, are offered to you both; and with sincere affection, I am, dear Sir, &c.

TO JONATHAN TRUMBULL, JUNIOR.

Mount Vernon, 5 January, 1784.

DEAR TRUMBULL,

Your obliging letter of the 15th of November did not reach me until some days after we had taken possession of the city of New York. The scene, that followed, of festivity, congratulation, addresses, and resignation, must be my apology for not replying to it sooner.

I sincerely thank you for the copy of the address of Governor Trumbull to the General Assembly and freemen of your State.* The sentiments contained in

* An address of Governor Trumbull to the Assembly of Connecticut, in October, 1783, declining a reëlection. He was then in the seventy-third year of his age, and had been governor of Connecticut fourteen years.

it are such, as would do honor to a patriot of any age or nation; at least they are too coincident with my own, not to meet with my warmest approbation. Be so good as to present my most cordial respects to the Governor, and let him know, that it is my wish, that the mutual friendship and esteem, which have been planted and fostered in the tumult of public life, may not wither and die in the serenity of retirement. Tell him, that we should rather amuse our evening hours of life in cultivating the tender plants, and bringing them to perfection, before they are transplanted to a happier clime.

Notwithstanding the jealous and contracted temper, which seems to prevail in some of the States, yet I cannot but hope and believe, that the good sense of the people will ultimately get the better of their prejudices; and that order and sound policy, though they do not come so often as one would wish, will be produced from the present unsettled and deranged state of public affairs. Indeed, I am happy to observe, that the political disposition is actually meliorating every day. Several of the States have manifested an inclination to invest Congress with more ample powers; most of the legislatures appear disposed to do perfect justice; and the Assembly of this commonwealth have just complied with the requisitions of Congress, and, I am informed, without a dissenting voice. Every thing, my dear Trumbull, will come right at last, as we have often prophesied. My only fear is, that we shall lose a little reputation first.*

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* Some parts of Governor Trumbull's address had not been acceptable to the majority of the legislature. He had spoken of the necessity of enlarging the powers of Congress, and of strengthening the arm of government. The following is a paragraph of the reply reported by a committee of the General Assembly, which was rejected by the lower house.

"That the secretary request of his Excellency a copy of his address,

After having passed, with as much prosperity as could be expected, through the career of public life, I have now reached the goal of domestic enjoyment; in which state, I assure you, I find your good wishes most acceptable to me. The family at Mount Vernon joins in the compliments and cordiality, with which

I am, dear Sir, &c.

TO DAVID HUMPHREYS.

Mount Vernon, 14 January, 1784.

MY DEAR HUMPHREYS,

I have been favored with your letter of the 16th. Be assured that there are few things, which would give me more pleasure than opportunities of evincing to you the sincerity of my friendship, and disposition to render you services at any time when it may be in my power.

Although all recommendations from me to Congress must now be considered as coming from a private character, yet I enter very cheerfully into your views; and, as far as my suggesting of them to that honorable body,

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that it may be published, which this Assembly are especially desirous of, as they consider those important principles of justice, benevolence, and subordination to law, therein inculcated, as constituting the only solid basis upon which social happiness can be established, and therefore deserving the serious attention of the good people of the State."

Upon this paragraph Mr. Trumbull remarked in his letter to General Washington; "It was rejected, lest, by adopting it, they should seem to convey to the people an idea of their concurring with the political sentiments contained in the address; so exceedingly jealous is the spirit of this State at present respecting the powers and the engagements of Congress, arising principally from their aversion to the half-pay and commutation granted to the army; principally I say arising from this cause. It is but too true, that some few are wicked enough to hope, that, by means of this clamor, they may be able to rid themselves of the whole public debt, by introducing so much confusion into public measures, as shall eventually produce a general abolition of the whole." — *MS. Letter, November 15th*, 1783.

accompanied by my testimonial of your competency to the execution of the duties of either of the offices in contemplation, will go, you have them freely; and the enclosed letter, which is a copy of the one I have written to Congress on the occasion, will be an evidence of my good wishes, whatever may be the success.

I cannot take my leave of you without offering those acknowledgments of your long and zealous services to the public, which your merits justly entitle you to, and which a grateful heart should not withhold; and I feel very sensibly the obligations I am personally under to you, for the aid I have derived from your abilities, for the cheerful assistance you have afforded me upon many interesting occasions, and for the attachment you have always manifested towards me. I shall hold in pleasing remembrance the friendship and intimacy, which have subsisted between us, and shall neglect no opportunity on my part to cultivate and improve them; being with unfeigned esteem and regard, my dear Humphreys, your most affectionate friend, &c.

TO THE PRESIDENT OF CONGRESS.

Mount Vernon, 14 January, 1784.

SIR,

The goodness of Congress in the assurances they were pleased to give me, of charging themselves with the interests of those confidential officers, who had attended me to the resignation of my public employments, and the request of your Excellency to Colonel Humphreys, after I had been honored with my public audience, that, if any thing should occur to him in consequence of what had just been suggested, he would communicate it to you in a letter, induce me to take

the liberty of bringing the wishes of that officer before Congress.

Having devoted the last seven or eight years to the service of his country, he is desirous of continuing in the walk of public life, although he is ignorant, as I also am, of the offices which Congress have to bestow, and may think him competent to. Two openings, however, seem likely to occur, either of which, I am persuaded, he would fill with as much advantage to the public, as reputation to himself. The one is, a regiment, in case a Continental peace establishment should be resolved on; the other, official secretary to an embassy abroad, if new appointments should be made, or a vacancy happen in the old ones.

There is a third office, which I barely hint at, with all possible deference, and with a diffidence which proceeds more from a doubt of the propriety of my suggesting it, than from any question which arises in my mind, of his competency to the duties; and that is, Secretary of Foreign Affairs, if Congress should think it expedient to make another appointment, and should find all those requisites in him, which are necessary to constitute a minister for that department. For his ability, integrity, punctuality, and sobriety, I can fully answer.

If I have gone too far, Congress will please to excuse it, and attribute the error to my wishes to serve a worthy character. I have the honor to be, &c.*

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* On the 12th of May following, Colonel Humphreys was chosen secretary to the commission for negotiating treaties of commerce with foreign powers.

TO EDWARD HAND.

Mount Vernon, 14 January, 1784.

DEAR SIR,

When I left Philadelphia, I hoped to have the pleasure of seeing you in Annapolis before my departure from thence, and to have an opportunity, previous to my resignation, of expressing to you personally, among the last acts of my official life, my entire approbation of your public conduct, particularly in the execution of the important duties of adjutant-general.

Notwithstanding I have been disappointed in that expectation, and have it now in my power, only as a private character, to make known my sentiments and feelings respecting my military friends; yet I cannot decline making use of the first occasion, after my retirement, of informing you, my dear Sir, how much reason I have had to be satisfied with the great zeal, attention, and ability manifested by you in conducting the business of your department; and how happy I should be in opportunities of demonstrating my sincere regard and esteem for you. It is unnecessary, I hope, to add with what pleasure I should see you at this place, being, dear Sir, &c.

TO THE PRESIDENT OF CONGRESS.

Mount Vernon, 14 January, 1784.

SIR,

I have had the pleasure to receive your letter of the 28th ultimo by Mr. Godin, and beg your Excellency to be persuaded, that I shall always be happy in opportunities of showing every suitable attention to foreigners

and gentlemen of such distinction, as those you did me the honor to introduce to my acquaintance.

I am truly sensible, Sir, that the extract from the instructions of the executive of Pennsylvania to their delegates contains another most flattering proof of the favorable opinion they are pleased to entertain of my past services. Every repeated mark of the approbation of my fellow citizens, especially of those invested with so dignified an appointment, demands my particular acknowledgment. Under this impression, I cannot but feel the greatest obligations to the Supreme Executive Council of the commonwealth of Pennsylvania. But, as my sentiments on the subject of their instructions have been long and well known to the public, I need not repeat them to your Excellency on the present occasion.

I have therefore only to add, that Mrs. Washington joins me in presenting our best compliments to Mrs. Mifflin, and that I have the honor to be, &c.*

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* The instructions of the Supreme Executive Council of Pennsylvania to the delegates in Congress from that State contained the following clause.

"Though his Excellency General Washington proposes in a short time to retire, yet his illustrious actions and virtues render his character so splendid and venerable, that, it is highly probable, the admiration and esteem of the world may make his life in a very considerable degree public, as numbers will be desirous of seeing the great and good man, who has so eminently contributed to the happiness of a nation. His very services to his country may therefore subject him to expenses, unless he permits her gratitude to interpose.

"We are perfectly acquainted with the disinterestedness and generosity of his soul. He thinks himself amply *rewarded* for all his labors and cares, by the love and prosperity of his fellow citizens. It is true, no rewards they can bestow can be equal to his merits. But they ought not to suffer those merits to be burthensome to him. We are convinced that the people of Pennsylvania would regret such a consequence.

"We are aware of the delicacy, with which this subject must be treated. But relying upon the good sense of Congress, we wish it may engage their early attention." — *December* 16*th*, 1783.

As one of the delegates from Pennsylvania, President Mifflin forwarded

TO BENJAMIN HARRISON, GOVERNOR OF VIRGINIA.

Mount Vernon, 18 January, 1784.

MY DEAR SIR,

I have just had the pleasure to receive your letter of the 8th. For the friendly and affectionate terms, in which you have welcomed my return to this country and to private life, and for the favorable light in which you are pleased to consider and express your sense of my past services, you have my warmest and most grateful acknowledgments.

That the prospect before us is, as you justly observe, fair, none can deny; but what use we shall make of it is exceedingly problematical; not but that I believe all things will come right at last, but like a young heir, come a little prematurely to a large inheritance, we shall wanton and run riot until we have brought our reputation to the brink of ruin, and then like him shall have to labor with the current of opinion, when compelled perhaps to do what prudence and common policy pointed out, as plain as any problem in Euclid, in the first instance.

The disinclination of the individual States to yield competent powers to Congress for the federal government, their unreasonable jealousy of that body and of one another, and the disposition, which seems to pervade each, of being all-wise and all-powerful within itself, will, if there is not a change in the system, be

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this paper to General Washington. The brief reply in the above letter prevented its being laid before Congress. That reply, indeed, was accordant with his principles and determination, made known when he received his commission in the army. It was then his fixed purpose to receive no compensation from his country for his services. To this resolution he rigidly adhered, never exhibiting any other claims, than the simple amount of his expenses while he held his commission and was in actual employment.

our downfall as a nation. This is as clear to me as A, B, C; and I think we have opposed Great Britain, and have arrived at the present state of peace and independency, to very little purpose, if we cannot conquer our own prejudices. The powers of Europe begin to see this, and our newly acquired friends, the British, are already and professedly acting upon this ground; and wisely too, if we are determined to persevere in our folly. They know that individual opposition to their measures is futile, and boast that we are not sufficiently united as a nation to give a general one! Is not the indignity alone of this declaration, while we are in the very act of peace-making and conciliation, sufficient to stimulate us to vest more extensive and adequate powers in the sovereign of these United States?

For my own part, although I am returned to, and am now mingled with, the class of private citizens, and like them must suffer all the evils of a tyranny, or of too great an extension of federal powers, I have no fears, arising from this source, in my mind; but I have many, and powerful ones indeed, which predict the worst consequences, from a half-starved, limping government, that appears to be always moving upon crutches, and tottering at every step. Men, chosen as the delegates in Congress are, cannot officially be dangerous. They depend upon the breath, nay, they are so much the creatures of the people, under the present constitution, that they can have no views, which could possibly be carried into execution, nor any interests distinct from those of their constituents. My political creed, therefore, is, to be wise in the choice of delegates, support them like gentlemen while they are our representatives, give them competent powers for all federal purposes, support them in the due exercise thereof, and, lastly, compel them to close attendance in Congress

during their delegation. These things, under the present mode and termination of elections, aided by annual instead of constant sessions, would, or I am exceedingly mistaken, make us one of the most wealthy, happy, respectable, and powerful nations, that ever inhabited the terrestrial globe. Without them, we shall, in my opinion, soon be every thing which is the direct reverse.

I shall look for you, in the first part of next month, with such other friends as may incline to accompany you, with great pleasure, being, with best respects to Mrs. Harrison, in which Mrs. Washington joins me,

Dear Sir, &c.

TO THE YANKEE CLUB OF STEWARTSTOWN, IN THE COUNTY OF TYRONE, IRELAND.

Mount Vernon, 20 January, 1784.

GENTLEMEN,

It is with unfeigned satisfaction, that I accept your congratulation on the late happy and glorious revolution.

The generous indignation against the foes to the rights of human nature, with which you seem to be animated, and the exalted sentiments of liberty, which you appear to entertain, are too consonant to the feelings and principles of the citizens of the United States of America, not to attract their veneration and esteem, did not the affectionate and anxious concern, with which you regarded their struggle for freedom and independence, entitle you to their more particular acknowledgments.

If, in the course of our successful contest, any good consequences have resulted to the oppressed kingdom

of Ireland, it will afford a new source of felicitation to all who respect the interests of humanity.

I am now, Gentlemen, to offer you my best thanks for the indulgent sentiments you are pleased to express of my conduct, and for your benevolent wishes respecting my personal welfare, as well as with regard to a more interesting object, the prosperity of my country. I have the honor to be, with due consideration, &c.

TO THE CHEVALIER JEAN DE HEINTZ.

Mount Vernon, 21 January, 1784.

SIR,

As soon as I had the honor of receiving your letter, containing a proposal of the Order of the Knights of Divine Providence,* I referred the subject of it to the decision of Congress, in my letter to that august body, dated the 28th of August last, a copy of which is enclosed. Whereupon the United States in Congress assembled were pleased to pass their act of the 5th instant, which is properly authenticated by their secretary, and which I have the honor of transmitting herewith.

Notwithstanding it appears to be incompatible with the principles of our national constitution to admit the introduction of any kind of nobility, knighthood, or distinctions of a similar nature, amongst the citizens of our republic, yet I pray you will have the goodness to make known to the Illustrious Knights of the Order

* An order of knighthood, which had recently been instituted in Poland. A proposal had been made to Congress, through General Washington, that they should nominate a number of suitable persons in America to become knights of the order. Congress resolved, that they could not, "consistently with the principles of the confederation," accept the proposal.

of Divine Providence, that we received with the deepest gratitude and most perfect respect this flattering mark of their attention and approbation. For the polite manner in which you have communicated the pleasure of the Order, you will be pleased to accept my best acknowledgments. I have the honor to be, &c.

TO PHILIP SCHUYLER.

Mount Vernon, 21 January, 1784.

DEAR SIR,

Your favor of the 20th of December found me, as you conjectured, by that fireside, from which I had been too long absent for my own convenience; to which I returned with the greatest avidity the moment my public avocations would permit; and from which I hope never again to be withdrawn.

While I am here, solacing myself in my retreat from the busy scenes of life, I am not only made extremely happy by the gratitude of my countrymen in general, but particularly so by the repeated proofs of the kindness and approbation of those, who have been more intimately conversant with my public transactions; and I need scarcely add, that the favorable opinion of no one is more acceptable, than that of yourself.

In recollecting the vicissitudes of fortune we have experienced, and the difficulties we have surmounted, I shall always call to mind the great assistance I have frequently received from you, both in your public and private character. May the blessings of peace amply reward your exertions. May you and your family, to whom the compliments of Mrs. Washington and myself are affectionately presented, long continue to enjoy every species of happiness this world can afford,

I am, dear Sir, &c.

TO CHARLES THOMSON, SECRETARY OF CONGRESS.

Mount Vernon, 22 January, 1784.

DEAR SIR,

The original letter and other papers from the Chevalier de Heintz, respecting the Order of the Knights of Divine Providence, were transmitted to Congress, without a copy being taken. I am at a loss, therefore, in what manner to direct my letter to him; but, if I recollect right, a mode is pointed out for the address by the secretary himself. Let me pray you, therefore, my good Sir, to examine into this matter, and, after giving my letter another cover, put it into the proper channel for conveyance.

If my commission is not necessary for the files of Congress, I should be glad to have it deposited among my own papers. It may serve *my grandchildren*, some fifty or an hundred years hence, for a theme to ruminate upon, if *they* should be contemplatively disposed.

We have been so fast locked up in snow and ice since Christmas, that all kinds of intercourse have been suspended; and a duty which I owed my mother, and intended ere this to have performed, has been forced to yield to the intemperance of the weather; but, as this again must submit to the approaching sun, I shall soon be enabled to discharge that duty for which nature and inclination have a call, and shall be ready to welcome my friends to the shade of this vine and fig-tree, where, I hope it is unnecessary to add, I should be exceedingly happy to see you, and any of *my late masters*, the representatives in Congress. Mrs. Washington, if she knew I was writing to you in this style, would, I am certain, adduce arguments to prove, that I ought to include Mrs. Thomson; but before she could

have half spun the thread of her discourse, it is more than probable I should have nonplused her by yielding readily to the force of her reasoning. With sentiments of sincere regard and esteem,* I am, Sir, &c.

TO THE MARQUIS DE LAFAYETTE.

Mount Vernon, 1 February, 1784.

At length, my dear Marquis, I am become a private citizen on the banks of the Potomac; and under the shadow of my own vine and my own fig-tree, free from the bustle of a camp, and the busy scenes of public life, I am solacing myself with those tranquil enjoyments, of which the soldier, who is ever in pursuit of fame, the statesman, whose watchful days and sleepless nights are spent in devising schemes to promote the welfare of his own, perhaps the ruin of other countries, as if this globe was insufficient for us all, and the courtier, who is always watching the countenance of his prince, in hopes of catching a gracious smile, can have very little conception. I have not only retired from all public employments, but I am re-

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* *From Mr. Thomson's Reply.* — "With respect to your *commission*, I have to inform you, that, previous to the receipt of your letter, it had been in agitation among the members to have an order passed for returning it to you in a gold box. A motion has accordingly been made to that effect, which was received with general approbation, and referred to a committee to be drawn up in proper terms. The committee have not yet reported. But I have not the least doubt of its being returned to you in a way, that will be satisfactory; and I heartily wish, that this sacred deposit may be preserved by your *children* and children's children to the latest posterity, and may prove an incentive to them to emulate the virtues of their worthy and great progenitor." — *Annapolis, February 7th.*

This intention it seems was never fulfilled. The original commission was retained, and is deposited in the department of state of the United States.

tiring within myself, and shall be able to view the solitary walk, and tread the paths of private life, with a heartfelt satisfaction. Envious of none, I am determined to be pleased with all; and this, my dear friend, being the order for my march, I will move gently down the stream of life, until I sleep with my fathers.

Except an introductory letter or two, and one countermanding my request respecting plate, I have not written to you since the middle of October by General Duportail. To inform you, at this late hour, that the city of New York was evacuated by the British forces on the 25th of November; that the American troops took possession of it the same day, and delivered it over to the civil authority of the State; that good order, contrary to the expectation and predictions of General Carleton, his officers, and all the loyalists, was immediately established; and that the harbour of New York was finally cleared of the British flag about the 5th or 6th of December, would be an insult to your intelligence. And that I remained eight days in New York after we took possession of the city; that I was very much hurried during that time, which was the reason I did not write to you from thence; that, taking Philadelphia in my way, I was obliged to remain there a week; that at Annapolis, where Congress were then and are now sitting, I did, on the 23d of December present them my commission, and make them my last bow, and on the eve of Christmas entered these doors an older man by near nine years than when I left them, is very uninteresting to any but myself. Since that period, we have been fast locked up in frost and snow, and excluded in a manner from all kinds of intercourse, the winter having been, and still continuing to be, extremely severe.

I have now to acknowledge and thank you for your

favors of the 22d of July and 8th of September, both of which, although the first is of old date, have come to hand since my letter to you of October. The accounts contained therein of the political and commercial state of affairs, as they respect America, are interesting, and I wish I could add, that they are altogether satisfactory. The agency you have had in both, particularly with regard to the free ports in France, is a fresh evidence of your unwearied endeavours to serve this country; but there is no part of your letters to Congress, my dear Marquis, which bespeaks the excellence of your heart more plainly, than that which contains those noble and generous sentiments on the justice, which is due to the faithful friends and servants of the public. But I must do Congress the justice to declare, that, as a body, I believe there is every disposition in them, not only to acknowledge the merits, but to reward the services of the army. There is a contractedness, I am sorry to add, in some of the States, from whence all our difficulties on this head proceed; but it is to be hoped, that the good sense and perseverance of the rest will ultimately prevail, as the spirit of *meanness* is beginning to subside.

From a letter, which I have just received from the governor of this State, I expect him here in a few days, when I shall not be unmindful of what you have written about the bust, and will endeavour to have matters respecting it placed on their proper basis. I thank you most sincerely, my dear Marquis, for your kind invitation to your house, if I should come to Paris. At present I see but little prospect of such a voyage. The deranged situation of my private concerns, occasioned by an absence of almost nine years, and an entire disregard of all private business during that period, will not only suspend, but may put it for ever out of

my power to gratify this wish. This not being the case with you, come with Madame de Lafayette, and view me in my domestic walks. I have often told you, and repeat it again, that no man could receive you in them with more friendship and affection than I should do; in which I am sure Mrs. Washington would cordially join me. We unite in respectful compliments to your lady, and best wishes for your little flock. With every sentiment of esteem, admiration, and love, I am, my dear Marquis, your most affectionate friend.

TO MAJOR-GENERAL KNOX.

Mount Vernon, 20 February, 1784.

MY DEAR SIR,

The bad weather, and the great care which the post-riders take of themselves, prevented your letters of the 3d and 9th of last month from getting to my hands till the 10th of this. My setting off next morning for Fredericksburg to pay my duty to an aged mother, and not returning till yesterday, will be admitted, I hope, as a sufficient apology for my silence until now.

I am much obliged by the trouble you have taken to report the state of the garrison and stores, together with the disposition of the troops at West Point to me; and I think the allowance of rations, or subsistence money, to such officers as could not retire at that inclement season, was not only perfectly humane, but perfectly just also, and that it must appear so to Congress.

It would seem to me, without having recourse to calculation, that the allowance of a major-general in a separate department to the person who shall discharge

the duties of secretary at war, master of ordnance, and commanding officer of the forces, which may be retained or raised on a peace establishment, is a very moderate demand. I expect the president and some members of Congress here in a day or two, and I will tell them so.

It was among my first acts, after I got home, to write to the president of each State society, appointing Philadelphia (and the first Monday in May) for the general meeting of the Cincinnati. Colonel Walker took all the letters to the presidents eastward of this with him before new year's day; and I despatched those for the southward, about the same time, by the post. I have even sent duplicates for fear of miscarriage; yet, though it is the most eligible method, it is to be feared it will not prove so effectual a communication, as a general notification in the public gazettes would have been. And, in case of failure, I shall be exceedingly sorry for not having adopted the most certain, as it would give me pleasure to find the first general meeting a very full one. I have named Philadelphia (contrary to my own judgment, as it is not central,) to comply with the wishes of South Carolina; which, being the most southern State, has desired it.* North Carolina I have not heard a tittle from, nor any thing official from New Hampshire. All the other States have acceded very unanimously to the proposition, which was sent from the army.

I am just beginning to experience that ease and freedom from public cares, which, however desirable, takes some time to realize; for, strange as it may seem, it is nevertheless true, that it was not till lately I could get the better of my usual custom of ruminating, as

* That is, the most southern State, from which delegates would go to attend the meeting of the Society of the Cincinnati.

soon as I waked in the morning, on the business of the ensuing day; and of my surprise at finding, after revolving many things in my mind, that I was no longer a public man, nor had any thing to do with public transactions.

I feel now, however, as I conceive a wearied traveller must do, who, after treading many a painful step with a heavy burthen on his shoulders, is eased of the latter, having reached the haven to which all the former were directed; and from his house-top is looking back, and tracing with an eager eye the meanders by which he escaped the quicksands and mires which lay in his way; and into which none but the all-powerful Guide and Dispenser of human events could have prevented his falling.

I shall be very happy, and I hope I shall not be disappointed, in seeing you at the proposed meeting in Philadelphia. The friendship I have conceived for you will not be impaired by absence, but it may be no unpleasing circumstance to brighten the chain by a renewal of the covenant. My best wishes attend Mrs. Knox and the little folks, in which Mrs. Washington most heartily joins me. With sentiments of the purest esteem, regard, and affection, I am, &c.

P. S. I hope General Greene will be in the delegation from Rhode Island, and that we shall see him at the general meeting of the Cincinnati. Will you intimate this to him? *

* When the army was about to be disbanded, the officers then present with the army instituted a society called the *Society of the Cincinnati.* The idea is said to have originated with General Knox. After some preliminary arrangements, a meeting of the officers was held on the 13th of May, 1783, at the cantonment near Hudson's River, when the institution was organized, and a general plan adopted. The following extract will show the principles upon which it was founded.

"The officers of the American army, having generally been taken from

TO THOMAS JEFFERSON, IN CONGRESS.

Mount Vernon, 15 March, 1784.

DEAR SIR,

The Baron informs me, that he is about to make a final settlement with Congress, and to obtain from them that compensation, which his services shall appear to have merited; having entered into no stipulation at the time he engaged in their service, either for pay or emoluments; rather choosing to let his services point to their own reward, after they were performed, than to set a value upon them beforehand; wishing, on the one hand, for nothing more than they deserved; convinced, on the other, that the honor and dignity of the sovereign power of these States would do him ample

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the citizens of America, possess a high veneration for the character of the illustrious Roman, Lucius Quinctius Cincinnatus; and, being resolved to follow his example by returning to their citizenship, they think they may with propriety denominate themselves the SOCIETY OF THE CINCINNATI.

"The following principles shall be immutable, and form the basis of the Society of the Cincinnati.

"An incessant attention to preserve inviolate those exalted rights and liberties of human nature, for which they have fought and bled, and without which the high rank of a rational being is a curse instead of a blessing.

"An unalterable determination to promote and cherish, between the respective States, that union and national honor so essentially necessary to their happiness, and the future dignity of the American empire.

"To render permanent the cordial affection subsisting among the officers. This spirit will dictate brotherly kindness in all things, and particularly extend to the most substantial acts of beneficence, according to the ability of the Society, towards those officers and their families, who unfortunately may be under the necessity of receiving it."

A branch of the general society was to be instituted in each State, and meetings were to be held annually. The general society, consisting of delegates, not exceeding five in number from each State society, was to meet as often at least as once in three years. The society was to be perpetual and hereditary, descending through the eldest male posterity of the members, and, in failure thereof, to such collateral branches as should be deemed worthy of becoming its supporters. Honorary members might

justice, if our cause should be crowned with success, if not, he would share their fortunes and fall with them.*

What the Baron's expectations are, if he should incline to make them known, can be best explained by himself; but this I have heard him say, that to be placed in the same situation that he was in when he came to this country would content him. What this was I know not; but it should seem, that, if a *foreigner* gets nothing by the service, he ought not to lose by it.

My sentiments, with respect to the importance of the Baron's services, have been delivered to Congress in so many instances, and he himself has received such repeated testimony of it, that it is unnecessary for me in this place (especially as I have laid aside my military character, and am disinclined to trouble Congress any longer with my applications,) to give fresh proofs of my approbation of his abilities and con-

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also be chosen in the several States, but not more than one to four of those in the military line, or their descendants. Membership was likewise extended to the French officers, who had been engaged in the American war. A medal of gold, suspended by a deep-blue ribbon edged with white, and descriptive of the union of America and France, was first adopted as a badge, or *order;* but this was afterwards altered, at the suggestion of Major L'Infant, to an *eagle,* bearing the figure of the medal on its breast. This form was thought to be better suited to the purposes of an *order.*

It does not appear, that General Washington took any part in forming the society, but, at the request of the officers, he put his name at the head of the list of members, and consented to act as president till the first general meeting, which was appointed to be held on the first Monday of May following. In October, while at Rocky Hill, he sent circulars to the senior officers in the different States, requesting them to give notice to him when the State societies should be organized; and recently he had sent other circulars appointing Philadelphia as the place of meeting on the first Monday of May.

A succinct history of the Society of the Cincinnati may be seen in MARSHALL'S *Life of Washington,* Vol. V. p. 24.

* For the general grounds upon which Baron Steuben engaged in the American service, see Vol. V. p. 526.

duct, tending to the same points; but I could wish to see his merit, which is great, and his services, which have been eminent, rewarded to his satisfaction. I am, with the most sincere esteem and regard, yours, &c.

TO BARON STEUBEN.

Mount Vernon, 15 March, 1784.

MY DEAR BARON,

I have perused with attention the plan, which you have formed, for establishing a Continental legion, and for training a certain part of the arms-bearing men of the union, as a militia in times of peace; and, with the small alterations, which have been suggested and made, I very much approve of it.

It was no unpleasing and flattering a circumstance to me, to find such a coincidence of ideas as appears to run through your plan, and the one I had the honor to lay before a committee of Congress in May last. Mine, however, was a hasty production, the consequence of a sudden call and little time for arrangement; yours, of maturer thought and better digestion. At the same time that I limited the propriety of a Continental militia, I glided almost insensibly into what I thought would, rather than what I conceived ought to be a proper peace establishment for this country.

A peace establishment ought always to have two objects in view; the one, present security of posts and of stores, and the public tranquillity; the other, to be prepared, if the latter is impracticable, to resist with efficacy the sudden attempts of a foreign or domestic enemy. If we have no occasion for troops for the first purposes, and were certain of not wanting any for the second, then all expense, of every nature and kind

whatsoever on this score, would be equally nugatory and unjustifiable; but, while men have a disposition to wrangle, and to disturb the peace of society, either from ambitious, political, or interested motives, common prudence and foresight require such an establishment, as is likely to ensure to us the blessings of peace, although the undertaking should be attended with difficulty and expense; and I can think of no plan more likely to answer the purpose, than the one you have suggested; which, the principles being established, may be enlarged or diminished at pleasure, according to circumstances. It therefore meets my approbation, and has my best wishes for its success.

I have the honor to be, &c.

TO MAJOR-GENERAL KNOX.

Mount Vernon, 20 March, 1784.

MY DEAR SIR,

Your letter of the 21st ultimo did not reach my hands till yesterday. Having the governor here, and a house full of company, and the post being on the point of setting out for the eastward, I must confine the few lines I shall be able at this time to write, to the business of the Cincinnati.

From what you have said of the temper of your Assembly respecting this society, from the current of sentiment in the other New England States thereon, and from the official letter, which I have lately received from the Marquis de Lafayette on this subject, I am more than ever of opinion, that the general meeting at Philadelphia in May next ought, by all means, to be full and respectable. I was sorry to find these words, therefore, in your letter, after naming the delegates from your State, — "Probably only two will attend."

I think not only the whole number chosen should attend, but the abilities of them, when met, should be coolly, deliberately, and wisely employed to obviate the prejudices and remove the jealousies, which are already imbibed, and more than probably, through ignorance, envy, and perhaps worse motives, will increase and spread. I cannot, therefore, forbear urging in strong terms the necessity of the measure. The ensuing general meeting is either *useful* or *useless;* if the former, the representatives of each State society ought to be punctual in their attendance, especially under present circumstances; if it is not, all ought to be exempted; and I am sure none can give the time, which this journey and business require, with less convenience to themselves than myself.

By a letter, which I have just received from General Greene, I am informed that himself, General Varnum, and Major Lyman are chosen to represent the society of the State of Rhode Island; that he intends to be in South Carolina before the meeting; and it is not expected that more than one will attend it! I wish this could be otherwise, and that General Greene would attend. Private interest or convenience may be a plea for many, and the meeting thereby be thin and unfit for the purpose of its institution.

I have heard nothing yet from New Hampshire, New York, or New Jersey, to the eastward, nor any thing from the southward; to the last, duplicates have long since been sent.

As there can be no interruption of the post by bad weather now, and there is time for it, pray let me hear more fully from you on the subject of this letter by the return of it; particularly what the committees of your Assembly have reported. Mrs. Washington joins me in best wishes for Mrs. Knox, yourself, and

the little folks, with, dear Sir, your most obedient and affectionate humble servant.*

TO DR. JAMES CRAIK.

Mount Vernon, 25 March, 1784.

DEAR SIR,

In answer to Mr. Bowie's request to you, permit me to assure that gentleman, that I shall at all times be glad to see him at this retreat; that, whenever he is here, I will give him the perusal of any public papers antecedent to my appointment to the command of the American army, that he may be laying up materials for his work; and that, whenever Congress shall have

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* General Washington wrote to Mr. Jefferson on the 8th of April, requesting a statement of his views in regard to the Society of the Cincinnati, and also desiring to be informed what were the probable sentiments of Congress on the same subject.

A pamphlet had been published, entitled *Considerations on the Society, or Order, of Cincinnati,*" which, although anonymous, was known to have been written by Judge Burke of South Carolina. It was the author's chief purpose to show, that the society created a nobility, or what he called a class of "*hereditary patricians*"; and he predicted very direful consequences to the liberty and happiness of the people, if the institution were allowed to gain strength upon the plan of its original establishment. He recommended legislative interference to put a stop to a political combination of military commanders, fraught with principles so dangerous, and portending to the republic evils so alarming.

"This pamphlet," said General Washington, "has, I am told, had its effect. People are alarmed, especially in the eastern States; how justly, and how contrary to the avowed principles of the society and the purity of their motives, I will not declare, lest it should appear that I wish to bias your judgment, rather than to obtain an opinion; which, if you please, might be accompanied with sentiments, under the information here given, respecting the most eligible measures to be pursued by the Society at their next meeting. You may be assured, Sir, that to the good opinion alone, which I entertain of your abilities and candor, this liberty is to be attributed."

See Mr. Jefferson's answer, containing a full expression of his sentiments, in JEFFERSON'S *Writings*, Vol. I. p. 223.

opened their archives to any historian for information, he shall have the examination of all others in my possession, which are subsequent thereto; but that, till this epoch, I do not think myself at liberty to unfold papers, which contain all the occurrences and transactions of my late command; first, because I conceive it to be respectful to the sovereign power to let them take the lead in this business; and next, because I have, upon this principle, refused Dr. Gordon and others, who are about to write the history of the revolution, this privilege.

I will frankly declare to you, my dear Doctor, that any memoirs of my life, distinct and unconnected with the general history of the war, would rather hurt my feelings than tickle my pride whilst I live. I had rather glide gently down the stream of life, leaving it to posterity to think and say what they please of me, than by any act of mine to have vanity or ostentation imputed to me. And I will further confess, that I was rather surprised into a consent, when Dr. Witherspoon (very unexpectedly) made the application, than considered the tendency of that consent. It did not occur to me, at that moment, from the manner in which the question was propounded, that no history of my life, without a very great deal of trouble indeed, could be written with the least degree of accuracy, unless recourse was had to me or to my papers for information; that it would not derive sufficient authenticity without a promulgation of this fact; and that such a promulgation would subject me to the imputation I have just mentioned, which would hurt me the more, as I do not think vanity is a trait of my character.

It is for this reason, and candor obliges me to be explicit, that I shall stipulate against the publication of the memoirs Mr. Bowie has in contemplation to give

the world, till I should see more probability of avoiding the darts, which I think would be pointed at me on such an occasion; and how far, under these circumstances, it would be worth Mr. Bowie's while to spend time, which might be more usefully employed in other matters, is with him to consider; as is also the practicability of doing it efficiently without having free access to the documents of this war, which must fill the most important pages of the memoir, and which, for the reasons already assigned, cannot be admitted at present. If nothing happens more than I at present foresee, I shall be in Philadelphia on or before the 1st of May, where it is probable I may see Mr. Bowie, and converse further with him on this subject. In the mean while, I will thank you to communicate these sentiments. I am, very truly, your affectionate friend, &c.

TO THOMAS JEFFERSON, IN CONGRESS.

Mount Vernon, 29 March, 1784.

DEAR SIR,

It was not in my power to answer your favor of the 15th by the last post, for the reason then assigned. I wish I may be able to do it to your satisfaction now, as I am again obliged to pay my attention to the other company, the Governor being gone.

My opinion coincides perfectly with yours respecting the practicability of an easy and short communication between the waters of the Ohio and Potomac, of the advantages of that communication and the preference it has over all others, and of the policy there would be in this State and Maryland to adopt and render it facile. But I confess to you freely, I have no expectation, that the public will adopt the measure; for, besides the jeal-

ousies which prevail, and the difficulty of proportioning such funds as may be allotted for the purposes you have mentioned, there are two others, which, in my opinion, will be yet harder to surmount. These are (if I have not imbibed too unfavorable an opinion of my countrymen) the impracticability of bringing the great and truly wise policy of the measure to their view, and the difficulty of extracting money from them for such a purpose, if it could be done; for it appears to me, maugre all the sufferings of the public creditors, breach of public faith, and loss of public reputation, that payment of the taxes, which are already laid, will be postponed as long as possible. How then are we to expect new ones for purposes more remote?

I am not so disinterested in this matter as you are; but I am made very happy to find that a man of discernment and liberality, who has no particular interest in the plan, thinks as I do, who have lands in that country, the value of which would be enhanced by the adoption of such a measure.

More than ten years ago I was struck with the importance of it; and, despairing of any aid from the public, I became a principal mover of a bill to empower a number of subscribers to undertake at their own expense, on conditions which were expressed, the extension of the navigation from tide water to Will's Creek, about one hundred and fifty miles; and I devoutly wish that this may not be the only expedient by which it can be effected now. To get this business in motion, I was obliged even upon that ground to comprehend James River, in order to remove the jealousies, which arose from the attempt to extend the navigation of the Potomac. The plan, however, was in a tolerably good train, when I set out for Cambridge in 1775, and would have been in an excellent way, had it not been for the

difficulties, which were met with in the Maryland Assembly from the opposition which was given (according to report) by the Baltimore merchants, who were alarmed, and perhaps not without cause, at the consequence of water transportation to Georgetown of the produce, which usually came to their market by land.

The local interest of that place, joined to the short-sighted politics or contracted views of another part of that Assembly, gave Mr. Thomas Johnson, who was a warm promoter of the scheme on the north side of the Potomac, a great deal of trouble. In this situation I left matters when I took command of the army. The war afterwards called men's attention to different objects, and all the money they could or would raise was applied to other purposes. But with you I am satisfied that not a moment ought to be lost in recommencing this business, as I know the Yorkers will delay no time to remove every obstacle in the way of the other communication, so soon as the posts of Oswego and Niagara are surrendered; and I shall be mistaken if they do not build vessels for the navigation of the lakes, which will supersede the necessity of coasting on either side.

It appears to me, that the interest and policy of Maryland are proportionably concerned with those of Virginia, to remove obstructions, and to invite the trade of the western country into the channel you have mentioned. You will have frequent opportunities of learning the sentiments of the principal characters of that State, respecting this matter; and I wish, if it should fall in your way, that you would discourse with Mr. Thomas Johnson, formerly governor of Maryland, on this subject. How far, upon mature consideration, I may depart from the resolution I had formed, of living perfectly at my ease, exempt from every kind of re-

sponsibility, is more than I can at present absolutely determine. The sums granted, the manner of granting them, the powers and objects, would merit consideration. The trouble, if my situation at the time would permit me to engage in a work of this sort, would be set at nought; and the immense advantages, which this country would derive from the measure, would be no small stimulus to the undertaking, if that undertaking could be made to comport with those ideas, and that line of conduct, with which I meant to glide gently down the current of life, and it did not interfere with any other plan I might have in contemplation.

I am not less in sentiment with you, respecting the impolicy of this State's grasping at more territory than they are competent to the government of; and, for the reasons you assign, I very much approve of a meridian from the mouth of the Great Kenhawa as a convenient and very proper line of separation, but I am mistaken if our chief magistrate will coincide with us in this opinion.

I will not enter upon the subject of commerce. It has its advantages and disadvantages; but which of them preponderates, is not now the question. From trade our citizens will not be restrained, and therefore it behoves us to place it in the most convenient channels under proper regulations, freed as much as possible from those vices, which luxury, the consequence of wealth and power, naturally introduces.

The incertitude, which prevails in Congress, and the non-attendance of its members, are discouraging to those, who are willing and ready to discharge the trust, which is reposed in them; whilst it is disgraceful in a high degree to our country. But it is my belief, that the case will never be otherwise, so long as that body persist in their present mode of doing business, and

will hold constant instead of annual sessions; against the former of which my mind furnishes me with a variety of arguments; but not one, in times of peace, in favor of them.

Annual sessions would always produce a full representation, and alertness in business. The delegates, after a separation of eight or ten months, would meet each other with glad countenances. They would be complaisant; they would yield to each other all, that duty to their constituents would allow; and they would have better opportunities of becoming acquainted with their sentiments, and removing improper prejudices, when they are imbibed, by mixing with them during the recess. Men, who are always together, get tired of each other's company; they throw off that restraint, which is necessary to keep things in proper tune; they say and do things, which are personally disgusting; this begets opposition; opposition begets faction; and so it goes on, till business is impeded, often at a stand. I am sure (having the business prepared by proper boards or a committee) an annual session of two months would despatch more business than is now done in twelve, and this by a full representation of the Union.

Long as this letter is, I intended to be more full on some of the points, and to touch on others; but it is not in my power, as I am obliged to snatch from company the moments, which give you this hasty production of my thoughts on the subject of your letter. With very great esteem and regard, I am, &c.

TO JONATHAN TRUMBULL, JUNIOR.

Mount Vernon, 4 April, 1784.

MY DEAR SIR,

The choice of your delegates to the general meeting of the Society of Cincinnati gave me pleasure. I wish very sincerely you would all attend. Let me impress this upon you, with a request that you would impress it upon your brothers of the delegation.

This meeting, considering the prejudices and jealousies which have arisen, should not only be respectable in numbers, but respectable in abilities. Our measures should be deliberate and wise. If we cannot convince the people, that their fears are ill founded, we should at least in a degree yield to them, and not suffer that, which was intended for the best of purposes, to produce a bad result; which will be the consequence of divisions, proceeding from an opposition to the current opinion, if this be the fact in the eastern States, as some say it is. Independently of this, there are other matters, which call for attention at the ensuing meeting.

You will oblige me, by having the enclosed advertisement inserted twice in a gazette of your State. The one, which is most diffusive among that class of people, whose views it is most likely to meet, will answer my purposes best. Know the cost, and I will pay it when we meet. Present my best regards to your good father, whether in or out of office. Mrs. Washington joins in best wishes for you and Mrs. Trumbull, with, dear Sir, your most obedient and affectionate humble servant.

TO MAJOR-GENERAL DUPORTAIL.

Mount Vernon, 4 April, 1784.

DEAR SIR,

At present I can do no more than snatch a moment to acknowledge (by Monsieur le Comte de Laval, who is going immediately to Paris, and gave me the honor of a call as he travelled from Charleston to New York,) the receipt of your letter of the 24th of December, to thank you for your kind remembrance of me, and to assure you that it will always give me great pleasure to hear from you or to see you in America.

Matters in this country, since you left it, remain nearly *in statu quo*. It is said, however, that a more liberal sentiment is taking place in those States, which were most opposed to commutation and the other interests of the army; and that the impost, which has labored so long in them, will certainly pass this spring. This will be a principal move towards restoring public credit, and raising our sinking reputation. More competent powers, it is thought, will also in a little time be vested in Congress, and all things will come right after the people feel the inconveniences, which they might have avoided, if they had not been too fond of judging for themselves.*

* The following remarks, contained in a letter from General Knox to General Washington, afford some degree of insight into the opinions of the members of Congress respecting their powers.

"I have been here nearly one week, and nothing of importance has been decided upon, owing to a contrariety of sentiments concerning the powers vested in Congress to raise troops in time of peace for any purpose. There appears but one sentiment respecting the necessity of having troops for the frontiers, but the difficulty is how to obtain them. The southern States are generally of opinion, that the confederation vests Congress with sufficient powers for this purpose, but the eastern States are of a different opinion. The eastern delegates are willing to *recommend* the raising of troops for the western posts; but the gentlemen from the southward say this would be giving up a right, which it is of impor-

I have only newspaper accounts of air-balloons, to which I do not know what credence to give; as the tales related of them are marvellous, and lead us to expect, that our friends at Paris in a little time will come flying through the air, instead of ploughing the ocean to get to America.

Present me affectionately to Gouvion, from whom I received a letter just at his departure from Philadelphia. Tell him he shall always have a first place in my esteem, and that whatever contributes to his happiness or interest will give me pleasure. With great esteem and regard, I am dear Sir, &c.

TO THE MARQUIS DE LAFAYETTE.

Mount Vernon, 4 April, 1784.

MY DEAR MARQUIS,

I have no expectation that this letter will find you in France. Your favor of November to me, and of December to Congress, both announce your intention of making us a visit this spring. On this hope I shall fully rely, and shall ardently long for the moment in which I can embrace you in America. Nothing could add more to the pleasure of this interview, than the happiness of seeing Madame de Lafayette with you,

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tance to preserve, and they cannot consent to *recommend* when they ought to *require*; so that from this cause it is to be feared, that there will not be any troops raised; and there are many difficulties as to sending those which are raised, and at West Point." — *Annapolis, May 28th.*

Again; "I write a line to inform you, that I am just setting out for Boston. The president, who has gone to Mount Vernon, will inform you of the state of public matters. Things are not well, and will probably be worse before they are better." — *June 4th.* A vote of Congress on the subject of *requiring* troops to be raised manifests the same difference as above indicated, between the opinions of the delegates from the east and the south. — *Journals, May 26th.*

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that I might have the honor of thanking her in person for the flattering letter she has been pleased to write me; and to assure her of the sincerity of my wishes, and those of Mrs. Washington, that she could make Mount Vernon her home while she stays in America.

Lest I should be disappointed of this gratification, I accompany this letter with another to the Marchioness; and, if I could express to her half what I feel upon the occasion, it would, if twenty years could be taken from the number of my days, make you diligent at your post. Adieu. It is unnecessary to tell you how much I am yours, &c.

TO THE MARCHIONESS DE LAFAYETTE.

Mount Vernon, 4 April, 1784.

MADAM,

It is now more than ever I want words to express the sensibility and gratitude, with which the honor of your felicitations of the 26th of December has inspired me. If my expression was equal to the feelings of my heart, the homage I am about to render you would appear in a more favorable point of view, than my most sanguine expectations will encourage me to hope for. I am more inclined, therefore, to rely upon the continuance of your indulgent sentiments towards me, and that innate goodness for which you are remarkable, than upon any merit I possess, or any assurances I could give of my sense of the obligation I am under for the honor you have conferred upon me by your correspondence.

Great as your claim is, as a French or American woman, or as the wife of my amiable friend, to my affectionate regards, you have others to which the palm

must be yielded. The charms of your person, and the beauties of your mind, have a more powerful operation. These, Madam, have endeared you to me, and every thing, which partakes of your nature, will have a claim to my affections. George and Virginia, the offspring of your love, whose names do honor to my country and to myself, have a double claim, and will be the objects of my vows.

Freed from the clangor of arms and the bustle of a camp, from the cares of public employment and the responsibility of office, I am now enjoying domestic ease under the shadow of my own vine and my own fig-tree; and in a small villa, with the implements of husbandry and lambkins around me, I expect to glide gently down the stream of life, till I am entombed in the mansion of my fathers.

Mrs. Washington is highly honored by your participations, and feels very sensibly the force of your polite invitation to Paris; but she is too far advanced in life, and is too much immersed in the care of her little progeny,* to cross the Atlantic. This, my dear Marchioness (indulge the freedom), is not the case with you. You have youth (and, if you should not incline to bring your children, can leave them with all the advantages of education), and must have a curiosity to see the country, young, rude, and uncultivated as it is, for the liberties of which your husband has fought, bled, and acquired much glory, where every body admires, every body loves him. Come, then, let me entreat you, and call my cottage your home; for your own doors do not open to you with more readiness than mine would. You will see the plain manner in which we live, and meet with rustic civility; and you shall taste the sim-

* The children of her son, John Parke Custis, who died in 1781. These children were three daughters and a son.

plicity of rural life. It will diversify the scene, and may give you a higher relish for the gayeties of the court, when you return to Versailles. In these wishes, and in most respectful compliments, Mrs. Washington joins me. With sentiments of strong attachment, and very great regard, I have the honor to be, Madam, &c.

TO MISS SIDNEY LEE.*

Mount Vernon, 15 April, 1784.

MADAM,

I fear you will think me inattentive to your commands. Appearances are against me, but I have not been unmindful of your request, or my promise. During my continuance with the army, I wrote several letters to Mr. Drew, clerk of the court in which the will of Major-General Lee was recorded; all of which I presume miscarried; as the first letter he acknowledged having received from me was written in December last, after I had retired to this seat. His letter will account for the delay, which took place afterwards; and the sending to Richmond, which is at a considerable distance from hence, to obtain the governor's certificate, has filled up the great measure of time, which has elapsed since my promise to procure you an attested copy of the will; and this, I hope, will plead for my seeming neglect. Berkeley is a remote county, much out of the post road, which may account for the miscarriage of my letters to Mr. Drew. Your application to me, Madam, required no apology. I

* The sister of General Charles Lee. She resided at Chester in England, and after her brother's death she wrote to General Washington, requesting his aid in procuring a copy of her brother's will, and information respecting the state in which his affairs had been left.

only regret, that it has not been in my power to comply with your request sooner. If there is any thing further, in which I can be serviceable, I pray you to command me. I have the honor to be, &c.

TO GOVERNOR TRUMBULL.

Philadelphia, 15 May, 1784.

DEAR SIR,

It was with great pleasure and thankfulness I received a recognisance of your friendship, in your letter of the 20th of last month.

It is indeed a pleasure, from the walks of private life to view in retrospect all the meanderings of our past labors, the difficulties through which we have waded, and the happy haven to which the ship has been brought. Is it possible, after this, that it should founder? Will not the All-wise and All-powerful Director of human events preserve it? I think he will. He may, however, for some wise purpose of his own, suffer our indiscretions and folly to place our national character low in the political scale; and this, unless more wisdom and less prejudice take the lead in our government, will most certainly happen.

Believe me, my dear Sir, there is no disparity in our ways of thinking and acting, though there may happen to be a little in the years we have lived, which places the advantage of the correspondence on my side, as I shall benefit by your experience and observations; and no correspondence can be more pleasing to me than that, which originates from similar sentiments and similar conduct through (though not a long war, the importance of it and attainments considered,) a painful contest. I pray you, therefore, to

continue me among the number of your friends, and to favor me with such observations and sentiments as may occur.

As my good friend, Colonel Trumbull, is perfectly acquainted with the proceedings of the meeting, which brought us together, our embarrassments and final decision, I will refer the detail of them to him. With the most perfect esteem and regard, I have the honor to be, &c.

TO PHILIP SCHUYLER.

Philadelphia, 15 May, 1784.

MY DEAR SIR,

It has long been my wish, and, until lately, my intention, to proceed from the present meeting of the Cincinnati to the Falls of Niagara, and probably into Canada. Two causes, however, prevent it. My private concerns are of such a nature, that it is morally impossible for me to be absent long from home at this juncture. It is indeed exceedingly inconvenient for me to be from home at all. The other is, that I am not disposed to be indebted for my passport to Niagara to the courtesy of the British, who are still I believe possessed of our western posts.

I cannot but thank you, however, my dear Sir, for the polite and friendly offers contained in your letters of the 6th and 12th instant, both of which are safe at hand. If ever I should have it in my power to make an excursion of that kind, nothing could add more to the pleasure of it than having you of the party.

We have been amazingly embarrassed in the business that brought us here. It is now drawing to a conclusion, and will soon be given to the public. Oth-

erwise I would give it to you in detail.* Mrs. Washington is not with me at this place, otherwise I am sure she would join me in best respects to Mrs. Schuyler and yourself. I am, with great esteem, &c.

TO COUNT D'ESTAING.

Philadelphia, 15 May, 1784.

SIR,

I cannot express to you all the gratitude, which I feel, for the very great politeness manifested for me in your letter of the 25th of December, which I now have the honor to acknowledge. The very tender and friendly regards, which you are pleased to mention as possessing your mind for my person and character, have affected me with the deepest sensibility, and will be for ever remembered, as a most agreeable token from the Count d'Estaing; for whose character as a gentleman and a soldier, and for whose attention to the American interests and cause, I have been impressed with the highest veneration.

I feel myself happy, that your Excellency countenances with so much cordiality the association formed by the officers of the American army; a bond of cement, Sir, which, if any thing could be wanting for that purpose, will, I trust, render durable and permanent those mutual friendships and connexions, which have happily taken root between the officers of your army and ours. And I am peculiarly happy to be able to inform you, that the wishes expressed in your letter are more than fulfilled; since, by the institution of our Society, as amended and altered at their general meet-

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* See APPENDIX, No. I.

ing in this city held during the present month, which will be officially forwarded to the Society in France, your Excellency will find that the honors of it are extended, not only to the few gentlemen honored by your particular mention, but to all the captains ranking as colonels in your navy; which, although not clearly expressed in the original constitution, is now in the fullest terms provided for, and not left to doubtful inference.

I am much pleased with the prospect of soon having the gratification of seeing in this country our mutual and worthy friend Lafayette. Be assured, Sir, I shall be among the warmest of his friends, who will welcome him to the American shore, and rejoice in an opportunity to embrace him in my arms. I am pleased that our confidence in Major L'Enfant has been so honorably placed, and that the business entrusted to that gentleman's conduct has been executed to so great satisfaction. With the highest regard, I am, &c.

TO COUNT DE ROCHAMBEAU.

Philadelphia, 16 May, 1784.

MY DEAR COUNT,

This letter will be handed to you by our mutual friend, General Armand, Marquis de la Rouerie. The merits of this gentleman, and his military services in this country, are too well known to you to require any commendation from me. If they did, he is possessed of the fullest testimony. He now wishes promotion and employment in the service of his country, and, as he is deserving of it, I wish he could be indulged; but good wishes are all I can afford, as it has been an established principle with me to avoid personal applications. The disposition of his Prince to reward the

brave and meritorious, and the justice of his government, will, I have no doubt, confer those honors on him, which he shall appear to deserve; and this, even if I were not restrained by the considerations just mentioned, is all I could ask. Permit me to repeat to you the assurances of my sincere esteem and regard, and the consideration with which I have the honor to be, my dear Count, &c.

TO DAVID HUMPHREYS.

Mount Vernon, 2 June, 1784.

MY DEAR HUMPHREYS,

I very sincerely congratulate you on your late appointment. It is honorable, and I dare say must be agreeable. I did not hear of it until I arrived at Annapolis, where I remained but one day, and that occasioned by the detention of my carriage and horses on the Eastern Shore. General Knox not reaching that place before I left it, your letter of the 18th only got to my hands on Sunday last by the post.

I now send you, under flying seals, letters to Mr. Jefferson, Dr. Franklin, and Count d'Estaing. The letter to the Chevalier Chastellux also mentions you and your appointment. My former correspondence with England ceased at the commencement of hostilities, and I have opened no new one since; but I enclose to you a letter for Sir Edward Newenham, of Ireland, from whom I have lately received several very polite letters, and a pressing invitation to correspond with him. He has been a warm friend to America during her whole struggle. He is a man of fortune, and of excellent character (as I am told), and may, if you should go to Ireland, be a valuable acquaintance.

It only remains for me now to wish you a pleasant passage, and that you may realize all the pleasure, which you must have in expectation. It cannot be necessary to add how happy I shall be at all times to hear from you. You will have it in your power to contribute much to my amusement and information, and as far as you can do the latter consistently with your duty and public trust, I shall be obliged. Further I do not require; and, even here, mark *private* what you think not altogether fit for the public ear, and it shall remain with me. Mrs. Washington adds her best wishes for you, and you may rest assured, that few friendships are warmer, or professions more sincere, than mine for you. Adieu, &c.

P. S. Just recollecting my old neighbour Colonel (who may now be Lord) Fairfax, I give you a letter to him also, in case you should go to England.*

TO BENJAMIN FRANKLIN.

Mount Vernon, 2 June, 1784.

DEAR SIR,

Congress having been pleased to appoint Colonel Humphreys secretary to the commissioners for forming commercial treaties in Europe, I take the liberty of introducing him to you.

This gentleman was several years in my family as an aid-de-camp. His zeal in the cause of his country, his good sense, prudence, and attachment to me,

* Colonel Humphreys sailed from New York for France in July, as secretary to the commissioners in Paris. General Kosciuszko took passage in the same vessel, having been in the United States nearly eight years, and served in the army from October, 1776, to the end of the war.

have rendered him dear to me; and I persuade myself you will find no confidence, which you may think proper to repose in him, misplaced. He possesses an excellent heart, good natural and acquired abilities, and sterling integrity, as well as sobriety and an obliging disposition. A full conviction of his possessing all these good qualities makes me less scrupulous of recommending him to your patronage and friendship. He will repeat to you the assurances of the perfect esteem, regard, and consideration, with which I have the honor to be, dear Sir, &c.

TO THE CHEVALIER DE CHASTELLUX.

Mount Vernon, 2 June, 1784.

MY DEAR SIR,

I had the honor to receive a short letter from you by Major L'Enfant. My official letters to the Counts d'Estaing and Rochambeau, which I expect will be submitted to the members of the Society of the Cincinnati in France, will inform you of the proceedings of the general meeting recently held at Philadelphia, and of the reasons, which induced a departure from some of the original principles and rules of the Society. As these have been detailed, I will not repeat, them; and as we have no occurrences out of the common course, except the establishment of ten new States in the Western Territory, and the appointment of Mr. Jefferson, whose talents and worth are well known to you, as one of the commissioners for forming commercial treaties in Europe,* I will

* A committee of Congress, consisting of Mr. Jefferson, Mr. Chase, and Mr. Howell, reported a plan for the temporary government of the

only repeat to you the assurances of my friendship, and of the pleasure I should feel in seeing you in the shade of those trees which my hands have planted; and which, by their rapid growth, at once indicate a knowledge of my declining years, and their disposition to spread their mantles over me before I go hence to return no more. For this, their gratitude, I will nurture them while I stay.

Before I conclude, permit me to recommend Colonel Humphreys, who is appointed secretary to the com-

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Western Territory, which was taken into consideration on the 19th of April.

According to this plan, the Territory was to be divided into ten States, by parallels of latitude and meridian lines. The settlers of each State were to form a temporary government for themselves, according to certain prescribed regulations, till their number should be equal to that of the inhabitants of the smallest State in the Confederation, when they were to be taken into the Union, and to enjoy all the privileges of the original States. The territorial governments were to be established by the settlers on the following principles as their basis.

"1. That they shall for ever remain a part of the United States of America.

"2. That in their persons, property, and territory, they shall be subject to the government of the United States in Congress assembled, and to the articles of confederation, in all those cases in which the original States shall be so subject.

"3. That they shall be subject to pay a part of the federal debts contracted or to be contracted, to be apportioned on them by Congress, according to the same common rule and measure by which apportionments thereof shall be made on the other States.

"4. That their respective governments shall be in republican forms, and shall admit no person to be a citizen, who holds any hereditary title.

"5. That, after the year 1800 of the Christian era, there shall be neither slavery nor involuntary servitude in any of the said States, otherwise than in punishment of crimes, whereof the party shall have been duly convicted to have been personally guilty."

The names of the ten new States, beginning at the northwest and proceeding southwardly, were to be Sylvania, Michigania, Chersonesus, Assenisipia, Metropotamia, Illenoia, Saratoga, Washington, Polypotamia, Pelisipia. The report of the committee was debated for several days, during which it underwent very essential changes, as appears by the form in which it was finally adopted. — *Journals, April 23d,* 1784.

mission, to your countenance and civilities while he remains in France. He possesses an excellent heart and a good understanding. With every sentiment of esteem and regard, I am, my dear Chevalier, your most affectionate, &c.

TO JAMES MADISON.

Mount Vernon, 12 June, 1784.

SIR,

Can nothing be done in our Assembly for poor Paine? Must the merits and service of *Common Sense* * continue to glide down the stream of time unrewarded by this country? His writings certainly have had a powerful effect upon the public mind. Ought they not, then, to meet an adequate return? He is poor, he is chagrined, and almost, if not altogether, in despair of relief. New York, not the least distressed, nor best able State in the Union, has done something for him. This kind of provision he prefers to an allowance from Congress. He has reasons for it, which to him are conclusive; and such, I think, as may be approved by others. His views are moderate; a decent independency is, I believe, all he aims at. Ought he to be disappointed of this? If you think otherwise, I am sure you will not only move the matter, but give it your support. For me, it only remains to feel for his situation; and to assure you of the sincere esteem and regard, with which I have the honor to be, dear Sir, &c.†

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* The signature affixed by Thomas Paine to his early political writings in favor of the independence of the United States.

† Similar letters were written to Patrick Henry and Richard Henry Lee. The subject was brought before the legislature of Virginia, and

TO MONSIEUR DE MARBOIS.*

Mount Vernon, 20 June, 1784.

SIR,

It was with very great pleasure, that I received from your own pen an account of the agreeable and happy connexion you were about to form with Miss Moore. Though you have given many proofs of your predilection and attachment to this country, yet this last may be considered as not only a great and tender one, but as the most pleasing and lasting tie of affec-

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it was proposed to give Mr. Paine a moiety of a tract of land on the eastern shore of the Chesapeake Bay.

"The easy reception it found," said Mr. Madison, "induced the friends of the measure to add the other moiety to the proposition, which would have raised the market value of the donation to about four thousand pounds, or upwards, though it would not probably have commanded a rent of more than one hundred pounds per annum. In this form the bill passed through two readings. The third reading proved, that the tide had suddenly changed, for the bill was thrown out by a large majority. An attempt was next made to sell the land in question, and apply two thousand pounds of the money to the purchase of a farm for Mr. Paine. This was lost by a single voice. Whether a greater disposition to reward patriotic and distinguished exertions of genius will be found on any succeeding occasion, is not for me to predetermine. Should it finally appear, that the merits of the man, whose writings have so much contributed to enforce and foster the spirit of independence in the people of America, are unable to inspire them with a just beneficence, the world, it is to be feared, will give us as little credit for our policy as for our gratitude in this particular." — *Letter, July 2d.*

Mr. Lee wrote, that he was not present when the proposition was brought forward. "I have been told," said he, "that it miscarried from its being observed, that he had shown enmity to this State by having written a pamphlet injurious to our claim of western territory. It has ever appeared to me, that this pamphlet was the consequence of Mr. Paine's being himself imposed upon, and that it was rather the fault of the place than the man." — *July 22d.*

The pamphlet here alluded to was entitled, *Public Good; being an Examination into the Claim of Virginia to the vacant Western Territory, and of the Right of the United States to the same;* 1780.

* Chargé d'Affaires in the United States from the court of Versailles, after the return of M. de la Luzerne to France.

tion. The accomplishments of the lady, and her connexions, cannot fail to make it so. On this joyous event, accept, I pray you, the congratulations of Mrs. Washington and myself, who cannot fail to participate in whatever contributes to the felicity of yourself and your amiable consort, with whom we both have the happiness of an acquaintance, and to whom and the family we beg leave to present our compliments. With very great esteem and regard, and an earnest desire to approve myself worthy of your friendship, I have the honor to be, &c.*

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* In the order of dates we may here introduce the following resolution, passed by the legislature of Virginia on the 22d of June.

"Resolved, that the Executive be requested to take measures for procuring a statue of General Washington to be of the finest marble, and best workmanship, with the following inscription on its pedestal.

"'The General Assembly of the Commonwealth of Virginia have caused this Statue to be erected as a Monument of Affection and Gratitude to George Washington, who, uniting to the Endowments of the Hero the Virtues of the Patriot, and exerting both in establishing the Liberties of his Country, has rendered his Name dear to his Fellow Citizens, and given the World an immortal Example of true Glory.'"

This statue was executed by Houdon, who was employed by Mr. Jefferson, at the request of the Governor of Virginia, and who came to America in the summer of 1785 for the express purpose of taking an exact cast of General Washington's features and person. He returned to Paris and finished his work in that place. The statue has always been considered as exhibiting a remarkable resemblance of the original. It is placed in the State-House at Richmond.

In a niche in the same apartment is likewise a marble bust of Lafayette, which was voted by the General Assembly of Virginia, in December, 1781, "as a lasting monument of his merit and their gratitude." Immediately after Lafayette's visit to Virginia, in 1784, the General Assembly authorized and desired the Governor to cause a similar bust to be procured, and presented in the name of the Commonwealth to the city of Paris, with a request that it should be accepted and preserved in some public place in that city. This bust was accepted by the authorities of the city of Paris, and placed in the Hôtel de Ville, with ceremonies suited to the occasion. See *Lettres d'un Cultivateur Américain*, Tom. III. p. 381.

TO DR. JAMES CRAIK.

Mount Vernon, 10 July, 1784.

DEAR DOCTOR,

I have come to a resolution, if not prevented by any thing at present unforeseen, to take a trip to the western country this fall, and for that purpose to leave home the first of September. By appointment I am to be at the Warm Springs on the 7th of that month; and at Gilbert Simpson's the 15th, where, having my partnership accounts, with some of very long standing, to settle, and things to provide for the trip to the Kenhawa, I expect to be by the 10th or 11th, that is, four or five days before the 15th. It is possible, though I cannot be certain at this time, that I shall, if I find it necessary to lay my lands off in lots, make a day or two's delay at each of my tracts upon the Ohio, before I reach the Kenhawa, where my stay will be the longest, and more or less according to circumstances.

I mention all these matters, that you may be fully apprized of my plan, and the time it may probably take to accomplish it. If, under this information, it would suit you to go with me, I should be very glad of your company. No other person except my nephew, Bushrod Washington, and that is uncertain, will be of the party; because it can be no amusement to others to follow me in a tour of business, and from one of my tracts of land to another; for I am not going to explore the country, nor am I in search of fresh lands, but to secure what I have; nor would it suit me to be embarrassed by the plans, movements, or whims of others, or even to have my own made unwieldy. For this reason I shall continue to decline all overtures, which may be made to accompany me. Your business and mine lie in the same part of the country, and are of a

similar nature; the only difference is, that mine may be longer in the execution. If you go, you will have occasion to take nothing from hence, but a servant to look after your horses, and such bedding as you may think proper to make use of. I will carry a marquee, some camp utensils, and a few stores. A boat, or some other kind of vessel, will be provided for the voyage down the river, either at my place on the Youghiogany, or Fort Pitt, measures for this purpose having been already taken. A few medicines, and hooks and lines, you may probably want. My compliments and best wishes, in which Mrs. Washington joins, are offered to Mrs. Craik and your family, and I am, with sincere esteem and friendship, dear Sir, yours, &c.*

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* The General Assembly of Virginia, on the 22d of June, voted an address to General Washington. A joint committee, appointed for the purpose by the two Houses, waited on him a few days afterwards at Mount Vernon, and presented to him the address in behalf of the Assembly; to which, on the 15th of July, he made the following reply.

"GENTLEMEN,

"With feelings, which are more easy to be conceived than expressed, I meet and reciprocate the congratulations of the representatives of this commonwealth on the final establishment of peace.

"Nothing can add more to the pleasure, which arises from a conscious discharge of public trust, than the approbation of one's country. To have been so happy, under a vicissitude of fortune, amidst the difficult and trying scenes of an arduous conflict, as to meet this, is, in my mind, to have attained the highest honor; and the consideration of it, in my present peaceful retirement, will heighten all my domestic joys, and constitute my greatest felicity.

"I should have been truly wanting in duty, and must have frustrated the great and important object for which we resorted to arms, if, seduced by a temporary regard for fame, I had suffered the paltry love of it to interfere with my country's welfare; the interest of which was the only inducement, which carried me into the field, or permitted the sacred rights of civil authority, though but for a moment, to be violated and infringed by a power, meant originally to rescue and confirm them.

"For those rewards and blessings, which you have invoked for me in this world, and for the fruition of that happiness, which you pray for in that which is to come, you have, Gentlemen, all my thanks and all my gratitude. I wish I could ensure them to you, and the State you represent, a hundred fold."

TO JACOB READ.*

Mount Vernon, 11 August, 1784.

DEAR SIR,

I return the letter you were so obliging as to send me, and thank you for the perusal of it. No copy has been taken; nor will any part of its contents transpire through me.

Although Mr. L——'s informant may have the means of acquiring knowledge, and though it is undoubted that the British cabinet wish to recover the United States to a dependence on that government, yet I can scarce think they ever expect to see it realized, or that they have any plan in contemplation to try to effect it; unless *our* want of wisdom, and perseverance in error, should in their judgment render the attempt certain. The affairs of Ireland, if our accounts from thence are to be relied on, are in too turbulent a state to suffer Great Britain to enter very soon into another quarrel with America, even if her finances were on a more respectable footing, than I believe them to be; and her prospect of success must diminish as our population increases, and the government becomes more consistent; without the last of which, indeed, any thing may be apprehended. It is, however, as necessary for the sovereign in council, as it is for the general in the field, not to despise information, but to hear all, compare all, combine them with other circumstances and take measures accordingly. Nothing, I confess, would sooner induce me to give credit to a hostile intention on the part of Great Britain, than their continuing, without the shadow of reason (for I really see none), to withhold from us the western posts on the American side of the line, and sending, as the gazettes

* A delegate in Congress from South Carolina.

say is their intention, Sir Guy Carleton over as Viceroy to their possessions in America, which are to undergo a new organization.

The opinion I have here given, you will readily perceive is founded upon the ideas I entertain of the temper of Ireland, the imbecility of Great Britain, and her internal divisions; for with pain I add, that I think our affairs are under wretched management, and that our conduct, if Great Britain were in circumstances to take advantage of it, would bid her hope every thing, while other powers might expect little from the wisdom or exertion of these States.

I thank you for your proffered services to the eastward. I have nothing to trouble you with, but wishing you may find the air of Rhode Island salubrious and beneficial to your mother, I have the honor to be, with great esteem, &c.

TO COUNT DE ROCHAMBEAU.

Mount Vernon, 20 August, 1784.

MY DEAR COUNT,

I thank you for your favor of the 16th of June by the Marquis de Lafayette, who arrived here three days ago; and for your other letter of the 4th of May, which also came safe.* Permit me to offer you my sincere congratulations on your appointment to the government

* Lafayette arrived at New York on the 4th of August, after a passage of thirty-four days from France. He remained a short time in New York, to receive the congratulations of the citizens, and also in Philadelphia, and then hastened forward to Mount Vernon, which place he reached on the 17th. He stayed there twelve days, and then returned to Baltimore, where a public address was presented to him in behalf of the citizens, followed by an elegant entertainment and other demonstrations of respect and joy.

of Picardy. It is an honorable testimony of the approbation of your Prince, and a just reward of your services and merit. Should fortune ever put it in my power to come to France, your being at Calais would be an irresistible inducement for me to make it a visit.

My letters from Philadelphia, public and private, would give you a full account of every matter and thing respecting the Society of the Cincinnati, and upon what footing all claims to the order were thereafter to be decided. To these referring, I shall save you the trouble of reading a repetition. Considering how recently the King of Sweden has changed the form of the government of that country, it is not so much to be wondered at, that his fears should get the better of his liberality, as to any thing which might have the semblance of republicanism; but when it is further considered, how few of his nation had, or could have, a right to the order, I think he might have suffered his complaisance to overcome them.*

I will not trouble you with a long letter at this time, because I have nothing worthy of communication. Mrs. Washington, always pleased with your recollection of her, and glad to hear of your health, prays you to accept her compliments and best wishes. Mine are always sincere and (though unknown) offered to Madame de Rochambeau, the Viscount your son, and any of the officers of the army you commanded in America, whom you may see, and with whom I have the honor of an acquaintance. With great esteem and regard,

I am, dear Sir, &c.

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* The King of Sweden had declined permitting the officers in the French army, who were his subjects, and who had been in America, to wear the order of the Cincinnati, on the ground that the institution had a republican tendency not suited to his government.

TO THE CHEVALIER DE LA LUZERNE.

Mount Vernon, 20 August, 1784.

SIR,

The letter your Excellency did me the honor to write, in the moment of your departure from this country, conferred the highest honor upon me; and it is not more flattering to my vanity, than it is deserving of my gratitude. I shall ever reflect with pleasure, Sir, on the readiness with which your communications to me have been made, and the despatch and ability with which you have conducted business in the line to which I was called; and what will render these reflections more precious is, that you have accompanied them with marks of friendship and confidence, as pleasing as they were honorable.

When I add, Sir, that you have impressed me with sentiments of sincere respect and attachment, I do not speak the language of my own heart only; it is the universal voice, and your departure will always be regretted. The only consolation left us is, that you are gone to receive the smiles and approbation of a prince, who knows full well how to distinguish and how to reward merit.

It would give me great pleasure to make you a visit in France; to pay my respectful homage to a sovereign, to whom America is so much indebted; and to renew the friendships, which I have had the honor to contract with so many respectable characters of your nation. But I despair; my fortune has been injured by the war, and my private concerns are so much deranged, as to require more time to recover them, than comports with the years of a man, who is sliding down the stream of life as fast as I am. But whether I am in this or that country, or wheresoever

I may be, nothing will lessen the respect, or shake the attachment, with which I have the honor to be, dear Sir, yours, &c.*

TO BENJAMIN HARRISON, GOVERNOR OF VIRGINIA.

Mount Vernon, 10 October, 1784.

DEAR SIR,

Upon my return from the western country a few days ago, I had the pleasure to receive your favor of the 17th ultimo. It has always been my intention to pay my respects to you, before the chance of another early and hard winter should make a warm fireside

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* General Washington left Mount Vernon on the 1st of September, on his tour to the western country, and was absent till the 4th of October, when he again reached home. The results of his observations during his tour will be found in his letter to Governor Harrison, which follows in the text.

It was his original purpose to go down the Ohio as far as the Great Kenhawa, but he changed his design after arriving at the Monongahela, where he was informed of the disquietude of the Indians.

"My tour to the westward," said he, in a letter to Mr. Jacob Read, "was less extensive than I intended. The Indians, from accounts, were in too dissatisfied a mood for me to expose myself to their insults, as I had no object in contemplation, which could warrant any risk. My property in that country having previously undergone every kind of attack and diminution, which the nature of it would admit, to see the condition of my lands, which were nearest and settled, and to dispose of those, which were more remote and unsettled, was all I had in view. The first I accomplished; the other I could not; and I returned three weeks sooner than I expected."—*November 3d.*

This tour was performed on horseback, and the whole distance travelled was six hundred and eighty miles. He crossed the mountains by the usual route of Braddock's Road, but returned through the wild and unsettled country, which is watered by the different branches of the Cheat River, and came into the Shenandoah Valley near Staunton. He kept a journal, in which were minutely recorded his conversations with every intelligent person, whom he met, respecting the facilities for internal navigation afforded by the rivers, which have their sources among the Allegany Mountains, and flow thence either to the east or the west.

too comfortable to be relinquished. And I shall feel an additional pleasure in offering this tribute of friendship and respect to you, by having the company of the Marquis de Lafayette, when he shall have revisited this place from his eastern tour, now every day to be expected.

I shall take the liberty now, my dear Sir, to suggest a matter, which would (if I am not too short-sighted a politician) mark your administration as an important era in the annals of this country, if it should be recommended by you and adopted by the Assembly.

It has long been my decided opinion, that the shortest, easiest, and least expensive communication with the invaluable and extensive country back of us would be by one or both of the rivers of this State, which have their sources in the Apalachian mountains. Nor am I singular in this opinion. Evans, in his Map and Analysis of the Middle Colonies, which, considering the early period at which they were given to the public, are done with amazing exactness, and Hutchins since, in his Topographical Description of the western country, a good part of which is from actual surveys, are decidedly of the same sentiments; as indeed are all others, who have had opportunities, and have been at the pains, to investigate and consider the subject.

But that this may not now stand as mere matter of opinion and assertion, unsupported by facts (such at least as the best maps now extant, compared with the oral testimony, which my opportunities in the course of the war have enabled me to obtain), I shall give you the different routes and distances from Detroit, by which all the trade of the northwestern parts of the united territory must pass; unless the Spaniards, contrary to their present policy, should engage part of

it, or the British should attempt to force nature, by carrying the trade of the Upper Lakes by the River Utawas into Canada, which I scarcely think they will or could effect. Taking Detroit then (which is putting ourselves in as unfavorable a point of view as we can be well placed in, because it is upon the line of the British territory,) as a point by which, as I have already observed, all that part of the trade must come, it appears from the statement enclosed, that the tide waters of this State are nearer to it by one hundred and sixty-eight miles, than those of the River St. Lawrence; or than those of the Hudson at Albany, by one hundred and seventy-six miles.

Maryland stands upon similar ground with Virginia. Pennsylvania, although the Susquehanna is an unfriendly water, much impeded, it is said, with rocks and rapids, and nowhere communicating with those, which lead to her capital, has it in contemplation to open a communication between Toby's Creek, which empties into the Allegany River ninety-five miles above Fort Pitt, and the west branch of the Susquehanna, and to cut a canal between the waters of the latter and the Schuylkill; the expense of which is easier to be conceived, than estimated or described by me. A people, however, who are possessed of the spirit of commerce, who see and who will pursue their advantages, may achieve almost any thing. In the mean time, under the uncertainty of these undertakings, they are smoothing the roads and paving the ways for the trade of that western world. That New York will do the same as soon as the British garrisons are removed, which are at present insurmountable obstacles in their way, no person, who knows the temper, genius, and policy of those people as well as I do, can harbour the smallest doubt.

Thus much with respect to rival States. Let me now take a short view of our own; and, being aware of the objections which are in the way, I will, in order to contrast them, enumerate them with the advantages.

The first and principal one is, the *unfortunate jealousy*, which ever has, and it is to be feared ever will prevail, lest one part of the State should obtain an advantage over the other parts, as if the benefits of the trade were not diffusive and beneficial to all. Then follows a train of difficulties, namely, that our people are already heavily taxed; that we have no money; that the advantages of this trade are remote; that the most direct route for it is through other States, over which we have no control; that the routes over which we have control are as distant as either of those which lead to Philadelphia, Albany, or Montreal; that a sufficient spirit of commerce does not pervade the citizens of this commonwealth; and that we are in fact doing for others, what they ought to do for themselves.

Without going into the investigation of a question, which has employed the pens of able politicians, namely, whether trade with foreigners is an advantage or disadvantage to a country, this State, as a part of the confederated States, all of which have the spirit of it very strongly working within them, must adopt it, or submit to the evils arising therefrom without receiving its benefits. Common policy, therefore, points clearly and strongly to the propriety of our enjoying all the advantages, which nature and our local situation afford us; and evinces clearly, that, unless this spirit could be totally eradicated in other States as well as in this, and every man be made to become either a cultivator of the land or a manufacturer of such articles as are prompted by necessity, such stimulus should be employed as will *force* this spirit, by showing to our

countrymen the superior advantages we possess beyond others, and the importance of being upon an equal footing with our neighbours.

If this is fair reasoning, it ought to follow as a consequence, that we should do our part towards opening the communication for the fur and peltry trade of the Lakes, and for the produce of the country which lies within, and which will, so soon as matters are settled with the Indians, and the terms on which Congress mean to dispose of the land, found to be favorable, are announced, be settled faster than any other ever was, or any one would imagine. This, then, when considered in an interested point of view, is alone sufficient to excite our endeavours. But in my opinion there is a political consideration for so doing, which is of still greater importance.

I need not remark to you, Sir, that the flanks and rear of the United States are possessed by other powers, and formidable ones too; nor how necessary it is to apply the cement of interest to bind all parts of the Union together by indissoluble bonds, especially that part of it, which lies immediately west of us, with the middle States. For what ties, let me ask, should we have upon those people? How entirely unconnected with them shall we be, and what troubles may we not apprehend, if the Spaniards on their right, and Great Britain on their left, instead of throwing stumbling-blocks in their way, as they now do, should hold out lures for their trade and alliance? What, when they get strength, which will be sooner than most people conceive (from the emigration of foreigners, who will have no particular predilection towards us, as well as from the removal of our own citizens), will be the consequence of their having formed close connexions with both or either of those powers, in a commercial way?

It needs not, in my opinion, the gift of prophecy to foretell.

The western States (I speak now from my own observation) stand as it were upon a pivot. The touch of a feather would turn them any way. They have looked down the Mississippi, until the Spaniards, very impolitically I think for themselves, threw difficulties in their way; and they looked that way for no other reason, than because they could glide gently down the stream; without considering, perhaps, the difficulties of the voyage back again, and the time necessary to perform it in; and because they have no other means of coming to us but by long land transportations and unimproved roads. These causes have hitherto checked the industry of the present settlers; for, except the demand for provisions, occasioned by the increase of population, and a little flour, which the necessities of the Spaniards compel them to buy, they have no incitements to labor. But smooth the road, and make easy the way for them, and then see what an influx of articles will be poured upon us; how amazingly our exports will be increased by them, and how amply we shall be compensated for any trouble and expense we may encounter to effect it.

A combination of circumstances makes the present conjuncture more favorable for Virginia, than for any other State in the Union, to fix these matters. The jealous and untoward disposition of the Spaniards on one hand, and the private views of some individuals, coinciding with the general policy of the court of Great Britain, on the other, to retain as long as possible the posts of Detroit, Niagara, and Oswego, (which, though done under the letter of the treaty, is certainly an infraction of the spirit of it, and injurious to the Union,) may be improved to the greatest advantage by this

State, if she would open the avenues to the trade of that country, and embrace the present moment to establish it. It only wants a beginning. The western inhabitants would do their part towards its execution. Weak as they are, they would meet us at least half way, rather than be driven into the arms of foreigners, or be made dependent upon them; which would eventually either bring on a separation of them from us, or a war between the United States and one or the other of those powers, most probably with the Spaniards.

The preliminary steps to the attainment of this great object would be attended with very little expense, and might, at the same time that it served to attract the attention of the western country, and convince the wavering inhabitants of our disposition to connect ourselves with them, and facilitate their commerce with us, be a means of removing those jealousies, which otherwise might take place among ourselves.

These, in my opinion, are, to appoint commissioners, who, from their situation, integrity, and abilities, can be under no suspicion of prejudice or predilection to one part more than to another. Let these commissioners make an actual survey of James River and the Potomac from tide-water to their respective sources; note with great accuracy the kind of navigation and the obstructions, the difficulty and expense attending the removal of these obstructions, the distances from place to place through their whole extent, and the nearest and best portage between these waters and the streams capable of improvement, which run into the Ohio; traverse these in like manner to their junction with the Ohio, and with equal accuracy. The navigation of the Ohio being well known, they will have less to do in the examination of it; but, never-

theless, let the courses and distances be taken to the mouth of the Muskingum, and up that river (notwithstanding it is in the ceded lands) to the carrying-place to the Cayahoga; down the Cayahoga to Lake Erie; and thence to Detroit. Let them do the same with Big Beaver Creek, although part of it is in the State of Pennsylvania; and also with the Scioto. In a word, let the waters east and west of the Ohio, which invite our notice by their proximity, and by the ease with which land transportation may be had between them and the Lakes on one side, and the Rivers Potomac and James on the other, be explored, accurately delineated, and a correct and connected map of the whole be presented to the public. These things being done, I shall be mistaken if prejudice does not yield to facts, jealousy to candor, and, finally, if reason and nature, thus aided, do not dictate what is right and proper to be done.

In the mean while, if it should be thought that the lapse of time, which is necessary to effect this work, may be attended with injurious consequences, could not there be a sum of money granted towards opening the best, or, if it should be deemed more eligible, two of the nearest communications (one to the northward and another to the southward) with the settlements to the westward; and an act be passed, if there should not appear a manifest disposition in the Assembly to make it a public undertaking, to incorporate and encourage private adventurers, if any should associate and solicit the same, for the purpose of extending the navigation of the Potomac or James River; and, in the former case, to request the concurrence of Maryland in the measure? It will appear from my statement of the different routes (and, as far as my means of information have extended, I have done it with the utmost candor), that all the produce of the

settlements about Fort Pitt can be brought to Alexandria by the Youghiogany in three hundred and four miles, whereof only thirty-one are land transportation; and by the Monongahela and Cheat Rivers in three hundred and sixty miles, twenty of which only are land carriage. Whereas the common road from Fort Pitt to Philadelphia is three hundred and twenty miles, all land transportation; or four hundred and seventy-six miles, if the Ohio, Toby's Creek, Susquehanna, and Schuylkill are made use of for this purpose. How much of this is by land, I know not; but, from the nature of the country, it must be very considerable. How much the interest and feelings of people thus circumstanced would be engaged to promote it, requires no illustration.

For my own part, I think it highly probable, that, upon the strictest scrutiny, if the Falls of the Great Kenhawa can be made navigable, or a short portage be had there, it will be found of equal importance and convenience to improve the navigation of both the James and Potomac. The latter, I am fully persuaded, affords the nearest communication with the Lakes; but James River may be more convenient for all the settlers below the mouth of the Great Kenhawa, and for some distance perhaps above and west of it; for I have no expectation, that any part of the trade above the Falls of the Ohio will go down that river and the Mississippi, much less that the returns will ever come up them, unless our want of foresight and good management is the occasion of it. Or, upon trial, if it should be found that these rivers, from the before-mentioned Falls, will admit the descent of sea-vessels, in that case, and the navigation of the former becoming free, it is probable that both vessels and cargoes will be carried to foreign markets and sold; but the returns for them will

never in the natural course of things ascend the long and rapid current of that river, which with the Ohio to the Falls, in their meanderings, is little if any short of two thousand miles. Upon the whole, the object in my estimation is of vast commercial and political importance. In this light I think posterity will consider it, and regret, if our conduct should give them cause, that the present favorable moment to secure so great a blessing for them was neglected.

One thing more remains, which I had like to have forgotten, and that is, the supposed difficulty of obtaining a passage through the State of Pennsylvania. How an application to its legislature would be relished, in the first instance, I will not undertake to decide; but of one thing I am almost certain, such an application would place that body in a very delicate situation. There are in the State of Pennsylvania at least one hundred thousand souls west of the Laurel Hill, who are groaning under the inconveniences of a long land transportation. They are wishing, indeed they are looking, for the improvement and extension of inland navigation; and, if this cannot be made easy for them to Philadelphia (at any rate it must be long), they will seek a mart elsewhere; the consequence of which would be, that the State, though contrary to the interests of its sea-ports, must submit to the loss of so much of its trade, or hazard not only the loss of the trade but the loss of the settlement also; for an opposition on the part of government to the extension of water transportation, so consonant with the essential interests of a large body of people, or any extraordinary impositions upon the exports or imports to or from another State, would ultimately bring on a separation between its eastern and western settlements; towards which there is not wanting a disposition at this

moment in that part of it beyond the mountains. I consider Rumsey's discovery for working boats against the stream, by mechanical powers principally, as not only a very fortunate invention for these States in general, but as one of those circumstances, which have combined to render the present time favorable above all others for fixing, if we are disposed to avail ourselves of them, a large portion of the trade of the western country in the bosom of this State irrevocably.

Long as this letter is, I intended to have written a fuller and more digested one, upon this important subject; but have met with so many interruptions since my return home, as almost to have precluded my writing at all. What I now give is crude; but if you are in sentiment with me, I have said enough; if there is not an accordance of opinion, I have said too much; and all I pray in the latter case is, that you will do me the justice to believe my motives are pure, however erroneous my judgment may be in this matter, and that I am, with the most perfect esteem and friendship,

Dear Sir, yours, &c.*

TO GEORGE CLINTON, GOVERNOR OF NEW YORK.

Mount Vernon, 25 November, 1784.

MY DEAR SIR,

A few days ago I had the pleasure to receive your favor of the 12th instant. Although I felt pain from your silence, I should have imputed that silence to any

* Governor Harrison replied; — "I was in great hopes of seeing you here before this, that I might acknowledge the receipt of your favor of the 10th of last month in person, and tell you how much I approve of your plan for opening the navigation of the western waters. The letter was so much more explicit than I could be, that I took the liberty to lay it before the Assembly, who appear so impressed with the utility of the

cause, rather than a diminution of friendship. I feel this passion for you too strongly implanted in my own breast, to harbour a suspicion of it in yours, where I flatter myself it is reciprocal, unless I had done something to deserve it, of which I am not conscious.

It gives me great pleasure to learn from yourself, that the State over which you preside is tranquil. Would to God it may ever remain so, and that all others may follow the example. Internal dissensions, and jarring with our neighbours, are not only productive of mischievous consequences as respects ourselves, but have a tendency to lessen our national character and importance in the eyes of European powers. If any thing can, this will, expose us to their intriguing politics, and may shake the Union.

It has been my avowed and uniform opinion, ever since the interview between Baron Steuben and General Haldimand last year, that, whilst a pretext could be found, the western posts would be withheld from us; and I do not think I should hazard a false prediction, were I to add, that they never will come into our hands in the condition they now are. When pretexts can no longer put on the garb of decency, a season may be named for the surrender, of which it would be impracticable for us to avail ourselves; and the Indians during that period may reduce them to ashes. I wish it may be otherwise, but these are my opinions.

It gave pain to Mrs. Washington and myself to hear of Mrs. Clinton's indisposition, and the sickness and accidents with which your little flock have been afflicted. Our best and sincere wishes are offered for them, and we hope shortly to hear of their perfect

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measure, that I dare say they will order the survey you propose immediately, and will at their next sitting proceed to carry the plan into execution." — *Richmond, November 13th.*

restoration, as we have a most affectionate regard for them all, and feel ourselves interested in every thing which concerns them.

I am sorry we have been disappointed in our expectation of the mineral spring at Saratoga; and of the purchase of that part of the Oriskany tract, on which Fort Schuyler stands; but I am very glad you have succeeded upon such advantageous terms in the purchase of six thousand acres adjoining; for you certainly have obtained it amazingly cheap. Be so good, my dear Sir, along with the other information you have kindly promised me, to signify whether you have any prospect of borrowing, on interest, money for the payment of my moiety, as was talked of between us, or whether I am to provide it in any other manner, that I may take measures accordingly. The time is also come for the payment of interest due on the old score, and I shall do it with as little delay as possible.

Give me leave now, my dear Sir, to thank you for your recollection of and attention to the small articles, which I prayed you to provide for me. Whenever you conceive the season is proper, and an opportunity offers, I shall hope to receive the balsam trees, or any others which you may think curious and exotic with us, as I am endeavouring to improve the grounds about my house in this way. If perchance the sloop Pilgrim is not yet sailed from your port, you would add to the favor you mean to confer on me, by causing a number of grape vines, sent to me by an uncle of the Chevalier de la Luzerne, brought over by Captain Williams, and deposited by him in the garden of Mr. Beekman near the city of New York, to be forwarded by that vessel. They consist of a variety of the most valuable eating grapes in France. A list of the kinds, and the distinctions of them, no doubt accompanied them. I pray

you to take some of each sort for your own use, and offer some to Mr. Beekman.

I thank you for the interest you take in the welfare of my nephew, and for his letter, which you were so obliging as to send me. Poor fellow! his pursuit after health is, I fear, altogether fruitless. Ever since the month of May he has been traversing the seas from island to island, but hitherto to very little effect. When he last wrote, he was about to sail for Charleston, where he proposed to spend the winter, and, if no salutary effects should be derived from it, to come hither in the spring and resign himself to his fate.

Mrs. Washington unites in affectionate regards for you, Mrs. Clinton, and family; and with every sentiment of friendship and respect, I am, &c.

P. S. Tell Walker, that Mrs. Washington and I join in congratulating him on his matrimonial connexion, and hope he will enjoy all the comforts and pleasures, which are to be derived from a *good* wife.*

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* At the date of this letter, General Washington had just returned from Richmond, whither he had been to meet the Marquis de Lafayette, and also to promote in the legislature of Virginia his views for a plan of internal navigation. He arrived there on the 15th of November. The next morning the House of Assembly passed the following resolution.

"Resolved, *nemine contradicente*, that, as a mark of their reverence for his character, and affection for his person, a committee of five members be appointed to wait upon him with the respectful regards of this House; to express to him the satisfaction they feel in the opportunity afforded by his presence, of offering this tribute to his merit; and to assure him, that, as they not only retain the most lasting impressions of the transcendent services rendered in his late public character, but have since his return to private life experienced proofs, that no change of situation can turn his thoughts from the welfare of his country, so his happiness can never cease to be an object of their most devout wishes and fervent supplications.

"Mr. Henry, Mr. Madison, Mr. Jones, Mr. C. H. Harrison, and Mr. Carrington are appointed a committee."

To the committee of five members, who were the bearers of this re-

TO DR. MESMER.

Mount Vernon, 25 November, 1784.

SIR,

The Marquis de Lafayette did me the honor of presenting to me your favor of the 16th of June, and of entering into some explanation of the powers of magnetism; the discovery of which, if it should prove as extensively beneficial as it is said it will, must be fortunate indeed for mankind, and redound very highly to the honor of that genius to whom it owes its birth. For the confidence reposed in me by the Society, which you have formed for the purpose of diffusing all the advantages expected, and for your favorable sentiments of me, I pray you to receive my gratitude, and the assurances of the respect and esteem, with which I have the honor to be, Sir, &c.

TO J. MANDRILLON, AT AMSTERDAM.

Mount Vernon, 25 November, 1784.

SIR,

I have had the honor to receive your favor of the 11th of June, accompanied with your *Remarks and Inquiries concerning America.* The honorable mention, which you make of me in both, is far above my de-

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solve, and of whom Patrick Henry was chairman, General Washington replied;

"GENTLEMEN,

"My sensibility is deeply affected by this distinguished mark of the affectionate regard of your honorable House. I lament, on this occasion, the want of those powers which would enable me to do justice to my feelings, and shall rely upon your indulgent report to supply the defect; at the same time I pray you to present, for me, the strongest assurances of unalterable affection and gratitude, for this last pleasing and flattering attention of my country."

serts, and to be ascribed more to your politeness than to my merits. On my gratitude, however, you have a powerful claim; at the same time that it is a matter of regret to me, that my want of knowledge in the French language will not allow me to become acquainted with all the beauties of your *Spectator*. I must pray you to do me the justice to believe, that I am, Sir, &c.*

TO THE MARCHIONESS DE LAFAYETTE.

Mount Vernon, 25 November, 1784.

MADAM,

If my expressions were equal to my sensibility, I should, in more elegant language than I am master of, declare to you my sense of the obligation I am under for the letter you did me the honor to write to me by the Marquis de Lafayette, and thanks for this flattering instance of your regard. The pleasure I received in once more embracing my friend could only have been increased by your presence, and the opportunity I should thereby have had of paying, in my own house, the homage of my respectful attachment to his better half. I have obtained a promise, which the Marquis has ratified to Mrs. Washington, that he will use his influence to bring you with him to this country, whenever he shall visit it again. When the weight of so powerful an advocate is on our side, will you, my dear

* The original titles of the two works here mentioned are, 1. *Recherches Philosophiques sur la Découverte de l'Amérique.* — 2. *Le Spectateur Américain; ou Remarques Générales sur l'Amérique Septentrionale et sur la République des Treize Etats-Unis.* The author was a zealous friend to the cause of American liberty, and his writings show him to have been a judicious observer, and well informed on the topics, which employed his pen.

Marchioness, deny us the pleasure of your accompanying him to the shores of Columbia? In offering our mite, we can only assure you, that endeavours shall not be wanting on our part to make this new world as agreeable to you, as rural scenes and peaceful retirement are competent to.*

The Marquis returns to you with all the warmth and ardor of a newly inspired lover. We restore him to you in good health, crowned with wreaths of love and respect from every part of the Union. That his meet-

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* After the Marquis de Lafayette left Mount Vernon, near the end of August, he returned to the northward, being greeted everywhere, and by all classes of people, with marked testimonials of satisfaction at seeing him again in America. From New York he ascended the Hudson to Albany, and accompanied the commissioners, who were proceeding to make a treaty with the Indians at Fort Schuyler. Thence he returned across the country to Connecticut, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, and Rhode Island. At Boston he embarked on board the French frigate Nymphe, for the Chesapeake Bay. Landing at Yorktown, he went to Williamsburg and Richmond. At this latter city, on the 17th of November, he met General Washington, who had arrived a short time before. Public honors were rendered to them by the General Assembly of the State. Lafayette accompanied Washington to Mount Vernon, where he made a second visit of about a week. He was addressed by the Assembly of Maryland at Annapolis, and in that town, on the 30th of November, the two friends separated. Thence Lafayette proceeded to Trenton, where Congress was then sitting. On the 25th of December he embarked at New York for France, on board the frigate Nymphe.

Accompanying the above letter was the following brief epistle directed to a young daughter of the Marchioness.

TO MADEMOISELLE DE LAFAYETTE.

"Mount Vernon, 25 November, 1784.

"Permit me to thank my dear little correspondent for the favor of her letter of the 18th of June last, and to impress her with the idea of the pleasure I shall derive from a continuance of them. Her papa is restored to her with all the good health, paternal affection, and honors, which her tender heart could wish. He will carry a kiss to her from me (which might be more agreeable from a pretty boy), and give her assurances of the affectionate regard with which I have the pleasure of being her well-wisher.

"GEORGE WASHINGTON."

ing with you, his family, and friends may be propitious, and as happy as your wishes can make it, that you may live long together revered and beloved, and that you may transmit to a numerous progeny the virtues, which you both possess, is the fervent wish of your devoted and most respectful humble servant.

N. B. In every good wish for you Mrs. Washington sincerely joins me.

TO THE CHEVALIER DE LA LUZERNE.

Mount Vernon, 5 December, 1784.

SIR,

Your early attention to me after your arrival at the court of Versailles, amidst scenes of gayety and the gratulations of friends, does me great honor, and excites my warmest acknowledgments. That your august sovereign, his amiable consort, and the princes his brothers, should deign to interest themselves in, and wish to be acquainted with, the circumstances of my life, is one of the most flattering incidents of it, and affects my sensibility beyond any expression I can give of my feelings. If any thing could overcome the present difficulties, which impede my desires to pay my respectful homage at your court, it would be the wish, which you say these august personages have been pleased to express to see me there, and the welcome reception I should meet from the nation at large, especially from those characters with whom I have the honor of a personal acquaintance; but I fear my vows and earnest wishes are the only tribute of respect I shall ever have it in my power to offer them in return.

It gave me great pleasure to learn from your letter of the 12th of September, that the sword, which had

been so lately sheathed, was likely to remain so for some time. Other information, according with appearances, seemed rather to indicate an approaching storm in the United Netherlands; which, in its consequences, might light the torch, that would kindle the flames of a general war in Europe. How far the policy of the British may yield to the claims of the Irish, is not for me to determine. The former, it should seem, have had too much of civil contention to engage, without some respite, in fresh broils; and the latter are too near, and too much divided among themselves, to offer effectual opposition without foreign aid, especially maritime. But I know not enough of their politics, or their expectations, to hazard an opinion respecting the issue of their disputes. That they slumbered during the favorable moment, none I think can deny; and favorable moments in war as in love, once lost, are seldom regained.

We have lately held a treaty with the Six Nations at Fort Stanwix, advantageously it is said to the United States, though the issue of it is not pleasing to the State of New York. The commissioners were by the last accounts proceeding by way of Fort Pitt to Cayahoga to a meeting of the western tribes, who every now and then have bickerings with our settlers on the Ohio, in which lives and property have been lost. At the *éclaircissement*, which is about to be had with them, it is to be hoped a proper understanding will take place, the causes of discontent be removed, and peace and amity perfectly reëstablished.

The honor of your correspondence I shall ever set a high value upon, and shall thank you for the continuation of it. The occurrences of Europe cannot come through a better informed channel, nor from a more pleasing pen. Such returns as can flow from the cottage of retirement, I will make you. These in-

deed will be inadequate; but to a mind generous as yours is, there is more pleasure in conferring than in receiving an obligation.

If, Sir, the name of your sovereign has been committed to your letter by his approbation or authority, you know how far my respectful acknowledgments are due, and can be offered with propriety. I wish not to obtrude myself, nor to step over the line, which custom has drawn. Although feeling more respect and veneration for the King and Queen of France than I have powers to utter, I should in that case rest more on your abilities to disclose them, and their goodness, than upon my own faint endeavours.* To the military characters, with whom I have the honor of an acquaintance, I present my best wishes and affectionate regards; at the same time that I never can too often repeat to you the assurances of esteem and attachment, with which I have the honor to be, &c.

TO THE MARQUIS DE LAFAYETTE.

Mount Vernon, 8 December, 1784.

MY DEAR MARQUIS,

The peregrination of the day in which I parted from you ended at Marlborough. The next day, bad as it was, I got home before dinner.

In the moment of our separation, upon the road as I travelled, and every hour since, I have felt all that love, respect, and attachment for you, with which length

* On this topic M. de la Luzerne said in reply; "I have executed your commissions as to his Majesty and the royal family; and the King is concerned, that your domestic affairs deprive him of the satisfaction of seeing a man, whose talents and virtues have procured the happiness of his own country, and excited the admiration of all others." — *Paris, February 15th*, 1785.

of years, close connexion, and your merits have inspired me. I often asked myself, as our carriages separated, whether that was the last sight I ever should have of you? And though I wished to say No, my fears answered Yes. I called to mind the days of my youth, and found they had long since fled to return no more; that I was now descending the hill I had been fifty-two years climbing, and that, though I was blest with a good constitution, I was of a short-lived family, and might soon expect to be entombed in the mansion of my fathers. These thoughts darkened the shades, and gave a gloom to the picture, and consequently to my prospect of seeing you again. But I will not repine; I have had my day.

Nothing of importance has occurred since I parted with you. I found my family well, and am now immersed in company; notwithstanding which, I have in haste produced a few more letters to give you the trouble of, rather inclining to commit them to your care, than to pass them through many and unknown hands.

It is unnecessary, I persuade myself, to repeat to you, my dear Marquis, the sincerity of my regards and friendship; nor have I words which could express my affection for you, were I to attempt it. My fervent prayers are offered for your safe and pleasant passage, happy meeting with Madame de Lafayette and family, and the completion of every wish of your heart; in all which Mrs. Washington joins me; as she does in compliments to Captain Grandecheau,* and the Chevalier,† of whom little Washington ‡ often speaks. With every sentiment, which is propitious and endearing, I am, &c.

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* Commander of the frigate Nymphe.

† The Chevalier de Caraman, who accompanied Lafayette on his tour.

‡ George Washington Parke Custis, grandson of Mrs. Washington.

TO RICHARD HENRY LEE, PRESIDENT OF CONGRESS.*

Mount Vernon, 14 December, 1784.

DEAR SIR,

The letter, which you did me the honor to write to me on the 20th of last month, only came to my hands by the post preceding the date of this. For the copy of the treaty held with the Six Nations, at Fort Stanwix, you will please to accept my thanks. These people have given, I think, all that the United States could reasonably have asked of them; more, perhaps, than the State of New York conceives ought to have been required from them, by any other than their own legislature.

I wish they were better satisfied. Individual States opposing the measures of the United States, encroaching upon the territory of one another, and setting up old and obsolete claims, is verifying the predictions of our enemies, and in reality is truly unfortunate. If the western tribes are as well disposed to treat with us as the northern Indians have been, and will cede a competent district of country northwest of the Ohio to answer our present purposes, it would be a circumstance as unexpected as pleasing to me; for it was apprehended, if they agreed to the latter at all, it would be reluctantly; but the example of the Six Nations, who, if they have not relinquished their claim, have pretensions to a large part of those lands, may have a powerful influence on the western gentry, and smooth the way for the commissioners, who have proceeded to Fort Pitt.

It gave me pleasure to find, by the last gazettes, that a sufficient number of States had assembled to form a

* Mr. Lee had been chosen President of Congress on the 30th of November.

Congress, and that you had been placed in the chair of it. On this event, permit me to offer my compliments of congratulation. To whatever causes the delay of this meeting may have been ascribed, it most certainly has an unfavorable aspect; contributes to lessen, already too low, the dignity and importance of the federal government, and is hurtful to our national character in the eyes of Europe.

It is said (how well founded I know not), that our Assembly have repealed their former act respecting British debts. If this be true, and the State of New York have not acted repugnantly to the terms of the treaty, the British government can no longer hold the western posts under that cover; but I shall be mistaken if they do not entrench themselves behind some other expedient to retain them, or appoint a time for surrendering them, of which we cannot avail ourselves; the probable consequences whereof will be the destruction of the works.

The Assemblies of Virginia and Maryland have now under consideration the extension of the inland navigation of the rivers Potomac and James, and opening a communication between them and the western waters. They seem fully impressed with the political as well as the commercial advantages, which would result from the accomplishment of these great objects, and I hope will embrace the present moment to put them in a train for execution. Would it not, at the same time, be worthy of the wisdom and attention of Congress to have the western waters well explored, the navigation of them fully ascertained, accurately laid down, and a complete and perfect map made of the country; at least as far westerly as the Miamies, running into the Ohio and Lake Erie, and to see how the waters of these communicate with the River St. Joseph, which empties into the Lake Michigan, and with the Wabash? For I can-

not forbear observing that the Miami village, in Hutchins's map, if it and the waters are laid down with accuracy, points to a very important post for the Union. The expense attending such an undertaking could not be great, the advantages would be unbounded; for sure I am, nature has made such a display of her bounties in those regions, that the more the country is explored, the more it will rise in estimation, consequently the greater will the revenue be to the Union.

Would there be any impropriety, do you think, Sir, in reserving for special sale all mines, minerals, and salt springs, in the general grants of land from the United States? The public, instead of the few knowing ones, might in that case receive the benefits, which would proceed from the sale of them, without infringing any rule of justice that occurs to me, or their own laws; but, on the contrary, inflict just punishment upon those, who in defiance of the latter have dared to create enemies to disturb the public tranquillity, by roaming over the country, marking and surveying the valuable spots in it, to the great disquiet of the western tribes of Indians, who have viewed these proceedings with jealous indignation. To hit upon a happy medium price for the western lands, for the prevention of monopoly on one hand, and not discouraging useful settlers on the other, will, no doubt, require consideration; but ought not, in my opinion, to employ too much time before the terms are announced. The spirit of emigration is great. People have got impatient, and, though you cannot stop the road, it is yet in your power to mark the way; a little while, and you will not be able to do either. It is easier to prevent than to remedy an evil. I shall be very happy in the continuation of your correspondence; and, with sentiments of great esteem and respect, I have the honor to be, &c.

TO THE MARQUIS DE LAFAYETTE.

Annapolis, 23 December, 1784.

MY DEAR MARQUIS,

You would scarcely expect to receive a letter from me at this place. A few hours before I set out for it, I as little expected to cross the Potomac again this winter, or even to be fifteen miles from home before the 1st of April, as I did to make you a visit in an air-balloon in France.

I am here, however, with General Gates, at the request of the Assembly of Virginia to fix matters with the Assembly of this State respecting the extension of the inland navigation of the Potomac, and the communication between it and the western waters; and I hope a plan will be agreed upon, to the mutual satisfaction of both States, and to the advantage of the Union at large.

It gave me pain to hear, that the frigate Nymphe grounded in her passage to New York. We have various accounts of this unlucky accident; but I hope she has received no damage, and that your embarkation is not delayed by it.* The enclosed came to my hand under cover of the letter which accompanies it, and which is explanatory of the delay it has met with. I can only repeat to you assurances of my best wishes for an agreeable passage and happy meeting with Madame de Lafayette and your family, and of the sincere attachment and affection, with which I am, &c.

P. S. You and your heirs male are made citizens of this State † by an act of Assembly. You will have an official account of it. This is by the by.

* The Nymphe ran aground on the West Bank, but was got off without essential injury.

† Maryland. He was also naturalized in the State of Virginia.—See HENING'S *Statutes*, Vol. XII. p. 30.

TO BENJAMIN HARRISON.

Mount Vernon, 22 January, 1785.

MY DEAR SIR,

It is not easy for me to decide by which my mind was most affected upon the receipt of your letter of the 6th instant, surprise or gratitude.* Both were greater than I have words to express. The attention and good wishes, which the Assembly have evidenced by their act for vesting in me one hundred and fifty shares in the navigation of the rivers Potomac and James, are more than mere compliment. There is an unequivocal and substantial meaning annexed. But believe me, Sir, notwithstanding this, no circumstance has happened to me since I left the walks of public life, which has so much embarrassed me.

On the one hand, I consider this act, as I have already observed, as a noble and unequivocal proof of the good opinion, the affection, and disposition of my

* *From Mr. Harrison's Letter.* — "It gives me great pleasure to inform you, that the Assembly yesterday, without a dissenting voice, complimented you with fifty shares in the Potomac Company, and one hundred in the James River Company; of which I give you this early notice to stop your subscribing on your own account. As this compliment is intended by your country in commemoration of your assiduous cares to promote her interest, I hope you will have no scruples in accepting the present, and thereby gratifying them in their most earnest wishes." — *Richmond, January 6th.*

The preamble to the act expresses the object of the legislature in making the donation. It runs thus. "It is the desire of the representatives of this commonwealth to embrace every suitable occasion of testifying their sense of the unexampled merits of George Washington towards his country; and it is their wish in particular, that those great works for its improvement, which, both as springing from the liberty which he has been so instrumental in establishing, and as encouraged by his patronage, will be durable monuments of his glory, may be made monuments also of the gratitude of his country." The act then proceeds to vest in George Washington, and his heirs and assigns for ever, the above one hundred and fifty shares in the Potomac and James River Companies. — HENING'S *Statutes*, Vol. XI. p. 525.

country to serve me; and I should be hurt, if, by declining the acceptance of it, my refusal should be construed into disrespect or the smallest slight upon the generous intention of the country, or it should be thought that an ostentatious display of disinterestedness or public virtue was the source of refusal. On the other hand, it is really my wish to have my mind, and my actions, which are the result of reflection, as free and independent as the air; that I may be more at liberty (in things which my opportunities and experience have brought me to the knowledge of) to express my sentiments, and, if necessary, to suggest what may occur to me under the fullest conviction, that, although my judgment may be arraigned, there may be no suspicion that sinister motives had the smallest influence in the suggestion. Not content, then, with the bare consciousness of my having, in all this navigation business, acted upon the clearest conviction of the political importance of the measure, I would wish that every individual, who may hear that it was a favorite plan of mine, may know also that I had no other motive for promoting it, than the advantage of which I conceived it would be productive to the Union, and to this State in particular, by cementing the eastern and western territory together, at the same time that it will give vigor and increase to our commerce, and be a convenience to our citizens.

How would this matter be viewed, then, by the eye of the world, and what would be the opinion of it, when it comes to be related, that George Washington has received twenty thousand dollars and five thousand pounds sterling of the public money as an interest therein? Would not this in the estimation of it (if I am entitled to any merit for the part I have acted, and without it there is no foundation for the act,) deprive me of the principal thing, which is laudable in my con-

duct? Would it not in some respects be considered in the same light as a pension? And would not the apprehension of this make me more reluctantly offer my sentiments in future? In a word, under whatever pretence, and however customarily these gratuitous gifts are made in other countries, should I not thenceforward be considered as a dependent? One moment's thought of which would give me more pain, than I should receive pleasure from the product of all the tolls, were every farthing of them vested in me; although I consider it as one of the most certain and increasing estates in the country.*

I have written to you with an openness becoming our friendship. I could have said more on the subject; but I have already said enough to let you into the state of my mind. I wish to know whether the ideas I entertain occurred to, and were expressed by, any member in or out of the House. Upon the whole you may be assured, my dear Sir, that my mind is not a little agitated. I want the best information and advice to settle it. I have no inclination, as I have already observed, to avail myself of the generosity of

* The act was officially communicated to him by Patrick Henry, then governor of Virginia. To that communication he replied as follows, more than a month after the above was written, and when his mind seems to have become firmly settled in its first impressions.

"I shall ever consider this act as an unequivocal and substantial testimony of the approving voice of my country for the part I have acted on the American theatre, and shall feast upon the recollection of it as often as it occurs to me; but this is all I can or mean to do. It was my first declaration in Congress, after accepting my military appointment, that I would not receive any thing for such services as I might be able to render the cause in which I had embarked. It was my fixed determination, when I surrendered that appointment, never to hold any other office under government, by which emolument might become a necessary appendage, or, in other words, which should withdraw me from the necessary attentions, which my own private concerns indispensably required; nor to accept of any pecuniary acknowledgment for what had passed. From this resolution my mind has never swerved." — *February 27th.*

the country; nor do I wish to appear ostentatiously disinterested (for more than probably my refusal would be ascribed to this motive), nor that the country should harbour an idea, that I am disposed to set little value on her favors, the manner of granting which is as flattering as the grant is important. My present difficulties, however, shall be no impediment to the progress of the undertaking. I will receive the full and frank opinions of my friends with thankfulness. I shall have time enough between the sitting of the next Assembly to consider the tendency of the act, and in this, as in all other matters, will endeavour to decide for the best. I am, my dear Sir, &c.

TO SIR JAMES JAY.*

Mount Vernon, 25 January, 1785.

SIR,

On account of the frost, and consequent interruption of the post, your favor of the 20th of December did not come to my hands until the 17th instant. It is to be regretted, that Lady Huntington's communications were not earlier made to the several legislatures, to which they were addressed; for, if the circumstances of any will allow them to be adopted, it will be found that a year will have been lost by the delay. In some States, they must have reached the executive after the Assemblies were up; in others, they would get there towards the close of them, when fresh matters are rarely attended to; and some sessions, as in this State, are held but once a year.

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* The brother of John Jay. He had lately returned from England, and brought propositions from the Countess of Huntington to some of the States for establishing settlements of emigrants among the Indians.

I am clearly in sentiment with her Ladyship, that Christianity will never make any progress among the Indians, or work any considerable reformation in their principles, until they are brought to a state of greater civilization; and the mode by which she means to attempt this, as far as I have been able to give it consideration, is as likely to succeed as any other, that could have been devised, and may in time effect the great and benevolent objects of her Ladyship's wishes; but that love of ease, impatience under any sort of control, and disinclination to any sort of pursuit but those of hunting and war, would discourage any person possessed of less piety, zeal, and philanthropy, than are characteristic of Lady Huntington.

Of all the States to which her Ladyship's addresses are gone, New York I believe is the only one that now possesses unlocated lands in such quantities, and so contiguous to any Indian settlement, as to subserve her plan of emigration; and whether that State can accommodate a grant to her and their satisfaction, you can determine with more precision than I. No part of the western territory of Pennsylvania is very contiguous to the habitations of the Indians; and, if I mistake not, it is besides otherwise appropriated. Virginia is not more convenient to them than Pennsylvania; and in her cession to the United States she was obliged to reserve lands northwest of the Ohio, to fulfil her own engagement to the military of the State. Nothing, then, in my opinion, can be expected from her. And North Carolina, having made a similar cession, is, I believe, equally incapacitated to grant any great quantity of land in a body, or much in parcels. It is my opinion, therefore, that Lady Huntington's proposal would come more properly before the United States, than any one or more of them individually; and it is my senti-

ment clearly, that, besides the pious and humane purposes which are in view, and of which we should never lose sight, motives of a political nature should have considerable influence, because such a migration as her Ladyship proposes must be an acquisition to any country.

There are but two reasons, which my mind suggests, that can be opposed to it. The first is, the pressing debts of the United States, which may call for all the revenue, that can be drawn from the advantageous sale of their lands, and the discontents, which might flow from discrimination, if peculiar conditions in the original purchase, or indulgences thereafter, are expected in favor of the class of settlers proposed by the plan; and, secondly, (what may have more weight) the prejudices of monarchical people, when they are unmixed with republicans, against those who have separated from them, and against their forms of government, and this too in the vicinity of the British in Canada. Whether these are to be placed in competition with the charitable design of the plan, considered in a religious point of view, or the great good which may result from the civilization of numerous tribes of savages when measured on a political scale, it becomes the wisdom of that honorable body to weigh with attention.

If they should decide in favor of the measure, valuable lands with respect to fertility of soil, salubrity of climate, and other natural advantages, might, in one body and in any quantity, be reserved for the purposes of such emigration, until the result of her Ladyship's endeavours to obtain them could be known; and this, too, either in the vicinity of the Indian towns, or at such convenient distance from them, as might be most agreeable to the emigrants, there being no settlements or appropriations (except the reservation in

favor of the Virginia line of the army) to my knowledge in all the country northwest of the Ohio, that could interfere therewith.

As I am well acquainted with the President of Congress, I will in the course of a few days write to him a private letter on this subject, giving the substance of Lady Huntington's plan, and asking his opinion of the encouragement it might be expected to receive from Congress, if it should be brought before that honorable body. You can do the same with your brother, Mr. John Jay now in Congress. None can judge better of the propriety of the measure, or give greater support to it, if it should ultimately come before the supreme council of the nation. It might lay the foundation, which would be serviceable hereafter.

Without repeating the arguments in support of the humane and benevolent intention of Lady Huntington, to christianize and reduce to a state of civilization the savage tribes within the limits of the American States, or descanting upon the advantages, which the Union may derive from the emigration, which is blended with and becomes part of the plan, I highly approve of them; and having, though concisely, touched upon the material part of your letter, it only remains for me to express my good wishes for the success of such a measure, and to assure you, that wherein I can be instrumental in its execution, my best endeavours may be commanded. I have the honor to be, &c.*

* In this place, with regard to the order of dates, may be inserted an extract from a letter written by General Washington to Mr. Æneas Lamont, who had dedicated to him a volume of poems, since it refers to an error frequently repeated in writings of authority. "It behoves me," said he to Mr. Lamont, "to correct a mistake in your printed address '*To the Patrons of the Fine Arts.*' I am not a Marshal of France, nor do I hold any commission or fill any office under that government or any other whatever." — *January 31st.* The idea, which has

TO BENJAMIN VAUGHAN, IN LONDON.

Mount Vernon, 5 February, 1785.

SIR,

I pray you to accept my acknowledgment of your polite letter of the 31st of October, and thanks for the flattering expressions contained in it. These are also due in a very particular manner to Doctor Price, for the honorable mention he has made of the American General in his excellent observations on the importance of the American Revolution, addressed "To the Free and United States of America," which I have seen and read with much pleasure.

Captain Haskell, in the ship May, arrived at Alexandria a few days ago; but a frost, which at present interrupts the navigation of the river, has prevented my sending for the chimney-piece. By the number of cases, however, I greatly fear it is too elegant and costly for my room and republican style of living. I regret exceedingly, that the politeness of your good father should have overcome my resolution, and thereby occasioned the trouble and difficulty, which this business seems to have involved. Nothing could have been more remote from my intentions, than to give this; and I earnestly, but in vain, entreated Mr. Vaughan to countermand his order for the shipment of it.

I have the honor to be, &c.

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usually prevailed, that General Washington was a marshal of France, probably originated from the circumstance of his having commanded Count de Rochambeau while that officer was in America.

TO RICHARD HENRY LEE, PRESIDENT OF CONGRESS.

Mount Vernon, 8 February, 1785.

DEAR SIR,

Since my last I have had the honor to receive your favors of the 26th of December and 16th of January. I have now the pleasure to inform you, that the Assemblies of Virginia and Maryland have enacted laws, of which the enclosed is a copy. They are exactly similar in both States. At the same time, and at the joint and equal expense of the two governments, the sum of six thousand six hundred and sixty-six dollars and two thirds is voted for opening and keeping in repair a road from the highest practicable navigation of this river, to that of the River Cheat, or Monongahela, as commissioners, who are appointed to survey and lay out the same, shall find most convenient and beneficial to the western settlers; and they have concurred in an application to the State of Pennsylvania for permission to open another road from Fort Cumberland to the Youghiogany, at the Three Forks, or Turkey Foot. A similar bill to the one enclosed is passed by our Assembly respecting the navigation of James River, and the communication between it and the waters of the Great Kenhawa. And the Executive has been authorized by a resolve of the Assembly to appoint commissioners, to examine and report the most convenient course for a canal between Elizabeth River and the waters of the Roanoke, with an estimate of the expense; and, if the last communication shall be found to require the concurrence of the State of North Carolina, to make application to the legislature thereof accordingly.

Towards the latter part of the year 1783, I was honored with a letter from the Countess of Huntington,

briefly reciting her benevolent intention of spreading Christianity among the tribes of Indians inhabiting our western territory, and expressing a desire for my advice and assistance to carry this charitable design into execution. I wrote to her Ladyship for answer, that it would by no means comport with the plan of retirement I had promised myself, to take an active or responsible part in this business; and that it was my belief, that there was no other way to effect her pious and benevolent design, but by first reducing these people to a state of greater civilization; but that I would give every aid in my power, consistent with that ease and tranquillity, to which I meant to devote the remainder of my life, to carry her plan into effect. Since that time I have been favored with other letters from her, and a few days ago, under cover from Sir James Jay, the papers herewith enclosed.*

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* These papers presented a general outline of Lady Huntington's plan. Her primary object was to civilize and Christianize the Indians. For this end she applied to some of the States for grants of lands, on which emigrants might establish themselves; and it seems to have been her design to encourage the emigration of people, whose character and habits she should approve, by effectual pecuniary contributions. Humanity and religion were her only motives. Schools were to be established, and religious instruction provided for, under such regulations as to produce the best practical results; and the arts of life were to be taught, and the means of civilization communicated, by the example of the settlers, and by such direct efforts as should be deemed suited to the great purposes in view.

Local and political reasons prevented Lady Huntington's plan from being carried into effect. Congress had pledged all the wild lands for a specific object, and the States had ceded their lands to the Union, and of course had none to appropriate for such a purpose. The answer from Mr. Lee to the above letter will explain this point in regard to Congress. "At the same time your packet reached me," said he, "there came one to Congress from Governor Henry, with her Ladyship's letter and plan enclosed, which the Governor strongly recommended. It was presently observed, that the terms upon which lands had been ceded to the United States did not leave it in the power of Congress to dispose of them for any other purpose, than for paying the debts of the pub-

As the plan contemplated by Lady Huntington, according to the outlines exhibited, is not only unexceptionable in its design and tendency, but has humanity and charity for its object, and may, I conceive, be made subservient to valuable political purposes, I take the liberty of laying the matter before you for your free and candid sentiments thereon. The communication I make of this matter to you, Sir, is in a private way; but you are at full liberty to communicate the plan of Lady Huntington to the members individually, or officially to Congress, as the importance and propriety of the measure may strike you. My reasons for it are these. First, I do not believe that any of the States to which she has written, unless it may be New York, are in circumstances, since their cession of territory, to comply with the requisitions respecting emigration; but it has been privately hinted to me, and ought not to become a matter of public notoriety, that, notwithstanding the indefinite expressions of the address respecting the number and occupations of the emigrants, which were designed to avoid giving alarms in England, the former will be great, and the useful artisans among them many. Secondly, because such emigration, if it should effect the object in view, besides the humane and charitable purposes, which would be thereby answered, will be of immense political consequence; and even if this should not succeed to her Ladyship's

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lic by a full and fair sale of all the ceded lands. It was indeed remarked, that those religious people, whom her Ladyship had in prospect to transport and fix on our frontier, were remarkable in the late war for a unanimous and bitter enmity to the American cause, and might form a dangerous settlement at so great a distance, contiguous to the Indians, and easily accessible to Canada; especially in the present very unfriendly temper of mind, that we now suppose the British nation possesses with respect to us. It was therefore ordered, that Governor Henry's letter with the enclosures should be filed, and nothing more be done in the affair."—*New York, February 27th.*

wishes, it must nevertheless be of considerable importance from the increase of population by orderly and well-disposed characters, who would at once form a barrier, and attempt the conversion of the Indians without involving an expense to the Union.

I see but one objection to a compact, unmixed, and powerful settlement of this kind, if it is likely to be so, of the weight of which you will judge. It is (and her Ladyship seems to have been aware of it, and endeavours to guard against it,) the placing of a people in a body upon our exterior, where they will be contiguous to Canada, who may bring with them strong prejudices against us and our form of government, and equally strong attachments to the country and institutions they leave, without the means (being detached and unmixed with citizens of different sentiments) of having them eradicated.

Her Ladyship has spoken so feelingly and sensibly on the religious and benevolent purposes of the plan, that no language of which I am possessed can add aught to enforce her observations. And no place bids so fair to answer her views, as that spot in Hutchins's Map, marked Miami Village and Fort. From thence there is a communication to all parts by water; and in my opinion we ought there to have a post.

Do not think it strange, my good Sir, that I send you the original papers from Lady Huntington. Many mistakenly think I am retired to ease, and that kind of tranquillity which would grow tiresome for want of employment; but at no period of my life, not in the eight years I served the public, have I been obliged to write so much myself, as I have done since my retirement. Were this confined to friendly communications and to my own business, it would be equally pleasing and trifling; but I have a thousand references

of old matters, with which I ought not to be troubled, but which, nevertheless, must receive some answer. These, with applications for certificates, copies of orders, &c., deprive me of my usual and necessary exercise. I have tried, but hitherto in vain, to get a secretary, or clerk, to take upon him the drudging part of this business. That you might not wonder at my parting with original papers on an important subject, I thought it incumbent upon me to assign the reason; and I beg you to be assured, that I have no other motive for it.*

Please to accept my thanks for the pamphlet you sent to me, and for the resolutions respecting the temporary and permanent seat of government. If I might be permitted to hazard an opinion of the latter, I would say, that, by the time your federal buildings on the banks of the Delaware, along the point of a

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* He wrote in a similar strain to General Knox. "It is not the letters from my friends," said he, "which give me trouble, or add aught to my perplexity. It is references to old matters, with which I have nothing to do; applications which oftentimes cannot be complied with; inquiries which would require the pen of a historian to satisfy; letters of compliment, as unmeaning perhaps as they are troublesome, but which must be attended to; and the commonplace business, which employs my pen and my time, often disagreeably. Indeed these, with company, deprive me of exercise, and, unless I can obtain relief, must be productive of disagreeable consequences."—*January 5th.* This labor and perplexity continued, however; for it was not till more than a year afterwards, that he employed a secretary. While negotiating for this object, he wrote to Mr. Tench Tilghman, describing the qualifications of the person he desired, and the duties he would be expected to perform. "The purposes for which I want him," said he, "are, to write letters agreeably to what shall be dictated; to do all other writing which shall be entrusted to him; keep accounts; examine, arrange, and properly methodize my papers, which are in great disorder; ride at my expense to do such business as I may have in this or other States; and to initiate two little children in the first rudiments of education."—*June 2d.* These were the two youngest children of the late Mr. Custis, who had been adopted by General Washington. At this time one was six and the other four years old.

triangle, are fit for the reception of Congress, it will be found that they are very improperly placed for the seat of the empire, and will have to undergo a second erection in a more convenient one. If the Union continues, and this is not the case, I will agree to be classed among the false prophets, and suffer for evil prediction. The letter for the Marquis de Lafayette, I pray you to forward by the packet. With great esteem and regard, I am, dear Sir, &c.

TO THE COUNTESS OF HUNTINGTON.

Mount Vernon, 27 February, 1785.

MY LADY,

The very polite and obliging letter, which you did me the honor to write to me on the 8th of April by Sir James Jay, never came to my hands until the 17th of last month; and this is the best apology I can make for a silence, which might otherwise appear inattentive, if not disrespectful, to a correspondence which does me much honor.

With respect to your humane and benevolent intentions towards the Indians, and the plan which your Ladyship has adopted to carry them into effect, they meet my highest approbation, and I should be very happy to find every possible encouragement given to them. It has been my opinion, since I have had opportunities to observe and to reflect upon the ignorance, indolence, and general pursuits of the Indians, that all attempts to reclaim them and introduce any system of religion or morality would prove fruitless, until they could be first brought into a state of greater civilization; at least, that this attempt should be accompanied by the other, and be enforced by example;

and I am happy to find that it is made the groundwork of your Ladyship's plan.

With respect to the other parts of the plan, and the prospect of obtaining lands for the emigrants, who are to be the instruments employed in the execution of it, my letter to Sir James Jay, in answer to his to me on this subject, will convey every information, which it is in my power at this time to give your Ladyship; and therefore I take the liberty of enclosing a transcript of it. Agreeably to the assurance there given, I have written fully to the President of Congress, with whom I have a particular intimacy, and transmitted copies of your Ladyship's plan, addresses, and the letter to the several States, with my approving sentiments thereon. I have informed him, that, though it comes to him as a private letter from me, it is nevertheless optional with him to make it a matter of private communication to the members individually, or officially to Congress, as his judgment shall dictate; giving it as my opinion, among other reasons, that I did not believe, that, since the cession of lands by individual States to the United States, any one of them, except New York, was in circumstances, however well inclined it might be, to carry your Ladyship's plan into effect.

What may be the result of your Ladyship's addresses to the States of North Carolina, Virginia, Pennsylvania, and New York individually, or of my statement of the matter in a friendly way to the President of Congress for the united deliberation of the whole, is not for me to anticipate, even were I acquainted with their sentiments. I have already observed, that no one of the States, unless New York may be in circumstances to do it, can furnish good lands in a body for such emigrants, as your Ladyship seems inclined to provide for. That Congress can, if the treaty depending with

the western Indians should terminate favorably, and a cession of lands be obtained from them, which I presume is one object for holding it, is certain; and unless the reasons, which I have mentioned in my letter to Sir James Jay, should be a let or bar, I have not a doubt that they would do it; in which case, any quantity of land, within such cession or purchase, might be obtained.

If ultimately success should not attend any of these applications, I submit as a dernier resort, for your Ladyship's information and consideration, a gazette containing the terms upon which I have offered several tracts of land (the quantity of which is since increased) of my own in that country, and which lie as convenient to the western tribes of Indians, as any in that territory appertaining to an individual State; as your Ladyship may perceive by having recourse to Hutchins's, Evans's, or any other map of that country; and by being informed, that Virginia has ceded all her claim to lands northwest of the Ohio to the United States, and that the western boundary of Pennsylvania is terminated by a meridian, crossing the river but a little distance from Fort Pitt.

It will appear evident, from the date of my publication, that I could not, at the time it was promulgated, have had an eye to your Ladyship's plan of emigration; and I earnestly pray, that my communication of the matter at this time may receive no other interpretation, than what is really meant, that is, a last resort, if it should be thought an eligible one.

I have no doubt that lands, if to be had at all, may be obtained from the United States, or an individual State, upon easier terms than those upon which I have offered mine; but being equally persuaded, that those of mine, from their situation and other local advantages,

are worth what I ask, I should not incline to take less for them, unless the whole by good and responsible characters, after an agent in their behalf had previously examined into the quality and conveniency of the land, should be engaged upon either of the tenures that are published; especially as these lands, from their particular situation, must become exceedingly valuable on account of the laws, which have just passed the Assemblies of Virginia and Maryland, for improving and extending the navigation of the Potomac as high as is practicable, and communicating it with the nearest western waters by good roads, and the act of the former Assembly, to do the same thing with James River, and the communication between it and the Great Kenhawa; by means of which the produce of the settlers on these lands of mine will come easily and cheaply to market.

I am, &c.

TO WILLIAM GORDON.

Mount Vernon, 8 March, 1785.

DEAR SIR,

Since my last to you, I have been favored with several of your letters, which should not have remained so long unacknowledged, had I not been a good deal pressed by matters which could not well be delayed; and had I not found a difficulty in complying with your request respecting the profiles. The latter it is not in my power to do now satisfactorily. Some imperfect miniature cuts I send you under cover with this letter. They were designed for me by Miss D'Hart of Elizabethtown, and given to Mrs. Washington, who, in sparing them, only wishes they may answer your purpose. For her I can get none cut yet. If

M. Du Simitiere is living, and at Philadelphia, it is possible he may have miniature engravings of most if not all the military characters you want, and in their proper dresses. He drew many good likenesses from the life, and got them engraved at Paris for sale. Among these I have seen that of General Gates, Baron Steuben, and others, as also of your humble servant. The Marquis de Lafayette had left this before your request for his profile came to hand.

You ask if the character of Colonel John Laurens, as drawn in the *Independent Chronicle* of the 2d of December last, is just. I answer, that such parts of the drawing, as have fallen under my own observation, are literally so; and that it is my firm belief his merits and worth richly entitle him to the whole picture. No man possessed more of the *amor patriæ*. In a word, he had not a fault, that I ever could discover, unless intrepidity bordering upon rashness could come under that denomination; and to this he was excited by the purest motives.

The order alluded to in my private letter, a copy of which you requested, I now send. You might have observed, for I believe the same private letter takes notice thereof, that it was in consequence of a resolve of Congress, that Fort Washington was so pertinaciously held, before the ships passed that post. Without unpacking chests, and unbundling papers, I cannot come at, and give you a copy of, that resolve; but I well remember, that, after reciting the importance of securing the upper navigation of the Hudson, I am directed to obtain hulks, to sink them for the purpose of obstructing the navigation, and to spare no other cost to effect it. Owing to this, the posts of Fort Washington and Fort Lee, on account of the narrowness of the river, some peculiarity of the channel, and the strength of the

ground at those places, were laboriously fortified. Owing to this, we left Fort Washington strongly garrisoned in our rear, when we were obliged to retreat to White Plains; and owing to this, also, Colonel Magaw, who commanded at it, was ordered to defend it to the last extremity.

But when, maugre all the obstructions which had been thrown into the channel, all the labor and expense which had been bestowed on the works, and the risks we had before run as to the garrison, the British ships of war had passed, and could pass those posts, it was clear to me from that moment, that they were no longer eligible, and that the one on the east side of the river ought to be withdrawn whilst it was in our power. In consequence thereof, the letter of the 8th of November, 1776, was written to General Greene from White Plains; that post and all the troops in the vicinity of it being under his orders. I give this information, and I furnish you with a copy of the order for the evacuation of Fort Washington, because you desire it, not that I want to exculpate myself from any censure, which may have fallen on me by charging another.*

Some accounts say, that matters are in train for an accommodation between the Austrians and Dutch. If so, the flames of war may be arrested before they blaze out and become very extensive; but, admitting the contrary, I hope none of the sparks will light on American ground, which, I fear, is made of too much combustible matter for its well-being.

Your young friend is in high health, and full of spirits. I informed him I was going to write to you,

* For the resolve of Congress alluded to above, the letter to General Greene, and other particulars relating to the loss of Fort Washington, see Vol. IV. pp. 164, 178, 182; and Vol. VI. p. 328.

and desired to know if he had any commands. His spontaneous answer was, "I beg he will make haste and come here again." All the rest of the family are well, except Mrs. Washington, who is too often troubled with bilious complaints to enjoy perfect health. All join in best wishes for you and yours, with dear Sir, &c.

TO JOHN WITHERSPOON.

Mount Vernon, 8 March, 1785.

REVEREND SIR,

From the cursory manner in which you mentioned the wish of Mr. Bowie to write the memoirs of my life, I was not, at the moment of your application and my assent to it, struck with the consequences to which it tended; but, when I came to reflect upon the matter afterwards, and had some conversation with Mr. Bowie on the subject, I found that this must be a very futile work (if under any circumstances it could be made interesting), unless he could be furnished with the incidents of my life, either from my papers or my recollection, and digest the past transactions into some sort of form and order with respect to times and circumstances. I knew, also, that many of the former, relative to the part I had acted in the war between France and Great Britain, from the year 1754 until the peace of Paris, and which contained some of the most interesting occurrences of my life, were lost,* and that my

* These papers were taken at Braddock's defeat. I had the good fortune to recover the originals of the most important ones in London, being the letters to Governor Dinwiddie written previously to that event. They are published in the second volume of this work, and throw much light on the incidents in the life of Washington during his campaign of 1754, particularly the circumstances of the death of Jumonville, and the affair at the Great Meadows.

memory is too treacherous to be relied on to supply this defect; and, admitting both were more perfect, that submitting such a publication to the world, whilst I continue on the theatre, might, however involuntarily I was led into it, be ascribed to vain motives.

These considerations prompted me to tell Mr. Bowie, when I saw him at Philadelphia in May last, that I could have no agency towards the publication of any memoirs respecting myself whilst living; but as I had, when asked, given my assent to you to have them written, and as he had been the first to propose it, he was welcome, if he thought his time would not be unprofitably spent, to take extracts from such documents as yet remained in my possession, and to avail himself of any other information I could give, provided the publication should be suspended until I had quitted the stage of human action. I then intended, as I informed him, to devote the present expiring winter to arranging my papers, which I had left at home, and which I found a mere mass of confusion, occasioned by frequently shifting them into trunks, and suddenly removing them from the reach of the enemy; but, however strange it my seem, it is nevertheless true, that, what with company, references of old matters with which I ought not to be troubled, applications for certificates and copies of orders, in addition to the routine of letters, which have multiplied greatly upon me, I have not been able to touch a single paper, or transact any business of my own in the way of accounts, during the whole course of the winter; or, in a word, since my retirement from public life.

I have two reasons, my good Sir, for making these communications to you. The first is, by way of apology for not complying with my promise, in the full extent you might expect, in favor of Mr. Bowie. The

second is, not knowing where that gentleman resides, I am at a loss without your assistance to give him the information respecting the disordered state of my papers, which he was told should be arranged, and a proper selection of them made for his inspection by the spring. Upon your kindness, therefore, I must rely to convey this information to him; for, though I should be glad at all times to see Mr. Bowie here, I should be unhappy if expectations, which cannot be realized at the present moment, should withdraw him from, or cause him to forego, some other pursuits, which may be more advantageous to him. My respects, if you please, to Mrs. Witherspoon. I have the honor to be, &c.

TO HUGH WILLIAMSON, IN CONGRESS.

Mount Vernon, 15 March, 1785.

SIR,

It has so happened, that your favor of the 19th ultimo did not come to my hands until the last mail arrived at Alexandria. By the return of it I have the honor to address this letter to you.

Mr. McMeikens's explanation of the movements of Rumsey's boat is consonant to my ideas, and warranted by the principles upon which it acts. The small manual assistance, to which I alluded, was to be applied in still water and to the steerage. The counteraction being proportioned to the action, it must ascend a swift current faster than a gentle stream; and both, with more ease than it can move through dead water. But in the first there may be, and no doubt is, a point beyond which it cannot go without involving difficulties, which may be found insurmountable. Further than

this I am not at liberty to explain myself; but if a model, or thing in miniature, is a just representation of a greater object in practice, there is no doubt of the utility of the invention. A view of his model, with the explanation, removed the principal doubt I ever had of the practicability of propelling against a stream by the aid of mechanical power; but as he wanted to avail himself of my introduction of it to the public attention, I chose previously to see the actual performance of the model in a descending stream before I passed my certificate; and having done so, all my doubts were satisfied.

I thank you, Sir, for your account of the last Indian treaty. I had received a similar one before, but do not comprehend by which line our northern limits are to be fixed. Two things seem naturally to result from this agreement with the western Indians; the terms on which the ceded lands are to be disposed of, and the mode of settling them. The first, in my opinion, ought not to be delayed; the second ought not to be too diffusive. Compact and progressive seating will give strength to the Union, admit law, and good government, and federal aids at an early period. Sparse settlements in several new States, or a large territory for one, will have the directly contrary effects; and, whilst it opens a large field to land-jobbers and speculators, who are prowling about like wolves in many shapes, will injure the real occupiers and useful citizens, and consequently the public interest.

If a tract of country, of convenient size for a new State, contiguous to the present settlements on the Ohio, is laid off, and a certain proportion of the land seated, or at least granted, before any other State is marked out, and no land is to be obtained beyond the limits of it, we shall, I conceive, reap great political

advantages from such a line of conduct; and, without it, we may be involved in much trouble and perplexity before any new State will be well organized, or contribute any thing to the support of the Union.

I have the honor to be, &c.

TO FRANCIS HOPKINSON.

Mount Vernon, 16 May, 1785.

DEAR SIR,

In for a penny, in for a pound, is an old adage. I am so hackneyed to the touches of the painter's pencil, that I am now altogether at their beck; and sit, "like Patience on a monument," whilst they are delineating the lines of my face. It is a proof, among many others, of what habit and custom can accomplish. At first I was as impatient at the request, and as restive under the operation, as a colt is under the saddle. The next time I submitted very reluctantly, but with less flouncing. Now, no dray-horse moves more readily to his thill than I to the painter's chair. It may easily be conceived, therefore, that I yielded a ready obedience to your request and to the views of Mr. Pine.

Letters from England recommendatory of this gentleman came to my hands previous to his arrival; not only as an artist of genius and taste, but as one who had shown a very friendly disposition towards this country, for which it seems he had been marked.

It gave me pleasure to hear from you. I shall always feel an interest in your happiness; and, with Mrs. Washington's compliments and best wishes joined to my own for Mrs. Hopkinson and yourself, I am, &c.*

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* It would seem, that Mr. Pine came to America with large designs. He stayed three weeks at Mount Vernon; and, after he went away,

TO WILLIAM GODDARD.

Mount Vernon, 11 June, 1785.

SIR,

On the 8th instant I received the favor of your letter of the 30th of May. In answer to it I can only say, that your own good judgment must direct you in the publication of the manuscript papers of General Lee. I can have no request to make concerning the work.

I never had a difference with that gentleman but on public ground, and my conduct towards him upon this occasion was such only, as I felt myself indispensably bound to adopt in discharge of the public trust reposed in me. If this produced in him unfavorable sentiments of me, I yet can never consider the conduct I pursued, with respect to him, either wrong or improper, however I may regret that it may have been differently viewed by him, and that it excited his censure and animadversions. Should there appear in General Lee's writings any thing injurious or unfriendly to me, the impartial and dispassionate world must decide how far I deserved it from the general tenor of my conduct.

I am gliding down the stream of life, and wish, as is natural, that my remaining days may be undisturbed and tranquil; and, conscious of my integrity, I would

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General Washington said of him, in a letter to Mr. George William Fairfax, who then resided in England; "Mr. Pine has met a favorable reception in this country, and may, I conceive, command as much business as he pleases. He is now preparing materials for historical representations of some of the most important events of the war."—*June 30th.* Mr. Pine also said, in a letter to Washington; "I have been some time at Annapolis, painting the portraits of patriots, legislators, heroes, and beauties, in order to adorn my large pictures, and I expect to pass a few weeks at Baltimore employed for the same purpose."—*December 16th*, 1785. How far the artist's project was pursued, is not known, but the pictures were not finished.

willingly hope, that nothing may occur tending to give me anxiety; but should any thing present itself in this or any other publication, I shall never undertake the painful task of recrimination, nor do I know that I should even enter upon my justification. I consider the communication you have made as a mark of great attention, and the whole of your letter as a proof of your esteem. I am, &c.*

TO MAJOR-GENERAL KNOX.

Mount Vernon, 18 June, 1785.

MY DEAR SIR,

I am quite ashamed to be so long deficient in acknowledging the receipt of your favors of the 24th and 29th of March and 5th of May; but an intervention of circumstances, with the enumeration of which I will not trouble you, has prevented it.

It gives me pleasure to hear of your appointment to the office of secretary at war. Without a compliment, I think a better choice could not have been made; and, though the salary is low, it may, under the circumstances you mention, be considered as auxiliary. The sentiment, which you have dropped respecting the appropriation of the shares, intended for me by the

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* The manuscript papers of General Charles Lee were left by his will to Mr. Goddard, who was at this time publisher of the *Maryland Journal* in Baltimore. He issued proposals for printing the papers of General Lee in three volumes. The work never appeared. It is said, that a person, whom he had associated with him in preparing the materials for the press, betrayed his trust, and sent parts of the manuscripts to England, where they were sold for his own benefit. They afforded the groundwork of a volume first printed in London, imperfect in its arrangement and character, entitled "The Life and Memoirs of the late Major-General Charles Lee." — THOMAS'S *History of Printing*, Vol. II. p. 355.

Assembly of this State, in the navigation of the rivers Potomac and James, is very pleasing, and it would give me great pleasure to see it realized.*

For want of a complete view of the designs of Congress respecting the western territory, and not knowing how matters stand with Great Britain in regard to the posts of Detroit and other places at present in the occupation of British garrisons on the American side of the line, I feel myself incompetent to answer your question respecting such posts, as may be proper for the purposes you mention; but, under my present ideas of the matter, I am inclined to think, if garrisons are to be established within the limits and jurisdiction of any of the present States, that Fort Pitt, or Fort McIntosh,† whichever shall be found most convenient and in best repair, would suit very well for a post of deposit, from whence all the others should be supplied; and, as it is my opinion, that great part of the fur and peltry of the lakes, when we shall have free access to them, will be transported by the Cayahoga and Big Beaver Creek, a post at the mouth of the latter, or some convenient post on the former, must be eligible. The spot marked Miami Village and Fort in Hutchins's Map, I have always considered as of importance, being a central point between Lake Erie, Lake Michigan, and the River Ohio, communicating with each by water. To these, the Falls of Ohio, or some more convenient spot for the lower settlements, may be added. Whether this chain embraces territory enough; whether it goes far enough to the southward to afford protection to the

* A suggestion that the donation of the legislature might be appropriated with proper delicacy to the support of the widows and orphans of those men, of the Virginia line, who had sacrificed their lives in the defence of their country.

† A fort on the Ohio River twenty-five miles below Pittsburg.

back settlers of Virginia, the Carolinas, and Georgia; or whether these objects are meant to be comprehended, it is for those, who are more behind the curtain than I am, to determine. My opinion of the matter is, that I have described a sufficient extent of the country to answer all our present purposes; beyond which neither settlements nor location of land ought to be admitted, because a larger would open a more extensive field for land-jobbers and speculators, weaken our frontiers by the sparseness of the settlements, exclude law, good government, and taxation to a late period, and injure the Union very essentially in many respects.

At the conflux of the Great Kenhawa with the Ohio a post might be established so as to answer beneficial purposes. Indeed it is the opinion of many, that it is a more eligible place than Pittsburg. In time, if the navigation of the Kenhawa should be extended, and an easy communication be had with James River, it may be so; but in the present state of things, considering the settlements about the latter, and the sources from whence proceed all the supplies of that country, it certainly is not. As a post for the protection of the river and the movements thereon, it may be desirable.

If I am right in my principles, some such distribution as the following may not be ineligible for the seven hundred men, that are ordered to be raised. At Fort Pitt, Fort McIntosh, or the mouth of the Big Beaver, being in the vicinity of a thick settlement, only one hundred men. At Cayahoga, whence a detachment might occupy the carrying-place between that water and the Big Beaver, being on the line and most exposed, I allow two hundred. At Miami Fort, or Village, and dependencies, two hundred. At the

Falls of Ohio, or some spot more convenient and healthy on that river, one hundred and fifty. At the conflux of the Great Kenhawa and the Ohio, for security of the river, protection of trade, and covering emigrants, fifty.

Mrs. Macaulay Graham,* Mr. Graham, and others, have just left us, after a stay of about ten days. A visit from a lady so celebrated in the literary world could not but be very flattering to me. Mrs. Washington joins me in best wishes for yourself, Mrs. Knox, and family. With great truth and sincerity, I am, my dear Sir, &c.

TO THE COUNTESS OF HUNTINGTON.

Mount Vernon, 30 June, 1785.

MY LADY,

In the last letter, which I have had the honor to write you, I informed your Ladyship of the communication I had made to the President of Congress of your wishes to obtain lands in the western territory for a number of emigrants, as a means of civilizing the savages, and propagating the Gospel among them. In answer he informed me, that Mr. Henry, governor of this State, had laid your Ladyship's letter and plan, which were addressed to him, before Congress, in a full and ample manner; but his private opinion of the matter was, that, under the pressure of debt to which this fund was to be appropriated, and the diversity of sentiments respecting the mode of applying it, no discrimination would or indeed could be made in favor of emigrants of any description whatsoever.

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* Better known as Mrs. Catharine Macaulay, celebrated for her History of England and other writings.

I waited, however, a considerable time to know the result of Mr. Henry's reference, before I would give your Ladyship the trouble of another letter on this subject; but hearing nothing more of the matter, and having had the enclosed resolutions and ordinance sent to me by the President himself, as the result of their long and painful deliberation on the mode of disposing of the western lands, I will delay no longer to express my concern, that your Ladyship's benevolent views are not better seconded. The resolutions and ordinance herewith enclosed, on which I shall make no comment, will give the terms and show your Ladyship the mode, by which the lands belonging to the Union are to be obtained; in other words, how difficult it must be for foreigners to know when or where to apply for them. With the highest respect and consideration,

I have the honor to be, &c.

TO DAVID HUMPHREYS.

Mount Vernon, 25 July, 1785.

MY DEAR HUMPHREYS,

Since my last to you, I have received your letter of the 15th of January, and, I believe, that of the 11th of November, and thank you for them. It always gives me pleasure to hear from you; and I should think, if *amusements* would spare you, business could not so much absorb your time as to prevent your writing more frequently, especially as there is a regular conveyance once a month by the packet.

As the complexion of European politics seems now (by letters I have received from the Marquis de Lafayette, the Chevalier de Chastellux, the Chevalier de la Luzerne, and others,) to have a tendency to peace, I

will say nothing of war, nor make any animadversions upon the contending powers; otherwise I might possibly have said, that the retreat from it seemed impossible after the explicit declaration of the parties. My first wish is to see this plague to mankind banished from the earth, and the sons and daughters of this world employed in more pleasing and innocent amusements, than in preparing implements and exercising them for the destruction of mankind. Rather than quarrel about territory, let the poor, the needy, and oppressed of the earth, and those who want land, resort to the fertile plains of our western country, the *second land of promise*, and there dwell in peace, fulfilling the first and great commandment.

In a former letter I informed you, my dear Humphreys, that if I had talents for it, I have not leisure to turn my thoughts to Commentaries. A consciousness of a defective education, and a certainty of the want of time, unfit me for such an undertaking. What with company, letters, and other matters, many of them quite extraneous, I have not been able to arrange my own private concerns so as to rescue them from that disordered state into which they have been thrown by the war, and to do which is become absolutely necessary for my support whilst I remain on this stage of human action. The sentiments of your last letter on this subject gave me great pleasure. I should be pleased indeed to see you undertake this business. Your abilities as a writer, your discernment respecting the principles which led to the decision by arms, your personal knowledge of many facts as they occurred in the progress of the war, your disposition to justice, candor, and impartiality, and your diligence in investigating truth, all combining, fit you, when joined with the vigor of life, for this task. I should with great

pleasure, not only give you the perusal of all my papers, but any oral information of circumstances, which cannot be obtained from these, that my memory will furnish; and I can with great truth add, that my house would not only be at your service during the period of your preparing this work, but (I say it without an unmeaning compliment) I should be exceedingly happy if you would make it your home. You might have an apartment to yourself, in which you would command your own time. You would be considered and treated as one of the family, and meet with that cordial reception and entertainment, which are characteristic of the sincerest friendship.

To send back European news would be idle, and we have little of a domestic kind worthy of attention. We have held treaties with the Indians, but they were so unseasonably delayed, that these people, by our last accounts from the westward, are in a discontented mood, supposed by many to be instigated thereto by our late enemies (now, to be sure, fast friends), who, from any thing I can learn, under the indefinite expression of the treaty, hold and seem resolved to retain possession of our western posts. Congress have, also, after a long and tedious deliberation, passed an ordinance for laying off the western territory into States, and for disposing of the land; but in a manner and on terms, which few people in the southern States conceive can be accomplished. Both sides are sure, and the event is appealed to. Let time decide it. It is however to be regretted, that local politics and self-interested views obtrude themselves into every measure of public utility.

My attention is more immediately engaged in a project, which I think big with great political, as well as commercial consequences to the States, especially the middle ones; it is by removing the obstructions and

extending the inland navigation of our rivers, to bring the States on the Atlantic in close connexion with those forming to the westward, by a short and easy transportation. Without this, I can easily conceive they will have different views, separate interests, and other connexions. I may be singular in my ideas, but they are these; that, to open a door to, and make easy the way for, those settlers to the westward (who ought to advance regularly and compactly) before we make any stir about the navigation of the Mississippi, and before our settlements are far advanced towards that river, would be our true line of policy. It can, I think, be demonstrated, that the produce of the western territory, (if the navigations which are now in hand succeed, of which I have no doubt,) as low down the Ohio as the Great Kenhawa, and I believe to the Falls, and between the parts above the Lakes, may be brought either to the highest shipping port on the Potomac or James river, at a less expense, with more ease, including the return, and in a much shorter time, than it can be carried to New Orleans, if the Spaniards, instead of restrictions, were to throw open their ports and invite our trade. But if the commerce of that country should embrace this channel, and connexions be formed, experience has taught us, and there is a very recent proof with great Britain, how next to impracticable it is to divert it; and, if that should be the case, the Atlantic States, especially as those to the westward will in a great degree be filled with foreigners, will be no more to the present Union, except to excite perhaps very justly our fears, than the country of California is, which is still more to the westward, and belonging to another power.

Mrs. Washington presents her compliments to you, and with every wish for your happiness,

I am, my dear Humphreys, &c.

TO EDMUND RANDOLPH.

Mount Vernon, 30 July, 1785.

DEAR SIR,

Although it is not my intention to derive any pecuniary advantage from the generous vote of the Assembly of this State, in consequence of its gratuitous gift of shares in the navigation of each of the rivers Potomac and James; yet, as I consider these undertakings of vast political and commercial importance to the States on the Atlantic, especially to those nearest the centre of the Union, and adjoining the western territory, I can let no act of mine impede the progress of the work. I have therefore come to the determination to hold the shares, which the treasurer was directed to subscribe for on my account, in trust for the use and benefit of the public; unless I should be able to discover, before the meeting of the Assembly, that it would be agreeable to it to have the product of the tolls arising from these shares applied as a fund, on which to establish two charity schools, one on each river, for the education and support of the children of the poor in this country, particularly the children of those men of this description, who have fallen in the defence of the rights and liberties of it. If the plan succeed, of which I have no doubt, I am sure it will be a very productive and increasing fund, and the moneys thus applied will be a beneficial institution.

I am aware that my non-acceptance of these shares will have various motives ascribed to it, among which an ostentatious display of disinterestedness, perhaps the charge of disrespect or slight of the favors of my country, may lead the van; but under a consciousness, that my conduct herein is not influenced by considerations of this nature, and that I shall act more agreeably to

my own feelings, and more consistently with my early declarations, by declining to accept them, I shall not only hope for indulgence, but a favorable interpretation of my conduct. My friends, I persuade myself, will acquit me; the world, I hope, will judge charitably.

Perceiving by the advertisements of Messrs. Cabell, Buchanan, and Southall, that half the sum required by the act, for opening and extending the navigation of James River, is subscribed, and the 20th of next month appointed for the subscribers to meet at Richmond, I take the liberty of giving you a power to act for me on that occasion. I would (having the accomplishment of this navigation much at heart) have attended in person, but the president and directors of the Potomac company, by their own appointment, are to commence the survey of this river in the early part of next month; for which purpose I shall leave home to-morrow. I am, Sir, &c.

TO RICHARD HENRY LEE, PRESIDENT OF CONGRESS.

Mount Vernon, 22 August, 1785.

DEAR SIR,

In my absence with the directors of the Potomac navigation, to examine the river and fix a plan of operations,* your favor, begun on the 23d and ended on the 31st of July, came to this place. I am sorry

* The object of this tour was to inspect minutely the course of the Potomac from Georgetown to Harper's Ferry, and ascertain in what places and to what extent it was necessary to construct canals and remove obstructions in the river. The directors went up by land, part of the distance on one side and part on the other; but they returned from Harper's Ferry to the head of the Great Falls above Georgetown in boats; thus effecting a thorough examination of the river. General Washington, as usual wherever he moved, attracted the attention of the

to hear of your late indisposition, but congratulate you on your recovery, hoping the reëstablishment of your health may be of long continuance.

The packet, which you were so obliging as to send, came safe, and I thank you for your care of it; but for want of a knowledge of the language, I can form no opinion of the dramatic performance. The current of my information from France is, that the dispute between the Emperor and Holland will be accommodated without bloodshed; but after the explicit declarations, which have been made on both sides, I do not see how either (especially the first) can recede from their claims. To save appearances, and to let the contending parties down handsomely, say some of my betters, is now the greatest difficulty; but all agree that a spark may set the whole in flames. Indeed Bavaria, it is expected, will do this.

It is to be hoped, that our minister at the court of London will bring that government to an explanation respecting the western posts, which it still retains on the American side of the line, contrary to the spirit, if not the letter of the treaty. My opinion from the first, and so I declared it, was, that these posts would be

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people and demonstrations of respect for his person. The following is an extract from his *Diary*.

"*August 5th.* — After breakfast, and after directing Mr. Rumsey, when he had marked the way and set the laborers at work, to meet us at Harper's Ferry, myself and the directors set out for the same place by way of Fredericktown in Maryland. Dined at a Dutchman's two miles above the mouth of the Monococy, and reached Fredericktown about five o'clock. Drank tea, supped, and lodged at Governor Johnson's. In the evening the bells rang and guns were fired; and a committee waited upon me by order of the gentlemen of the town to request, that I would stay the next day and partake of a public dinner, which the town were desirous of giving me. But, as arrangements had been made, and the time for examining the Shenandoah Falls, previously to the day fixed for receiving laborers into pay, was short, I found it most expedient to decline the honor."

detained from us as long as they could be held under any pretence whatsoever. I have not changed it, though I wish for cause to do so, as it may become a serious matter. However singular the opinion may be, I cannot divest myself of it, that the navigation of the Mississippi, *at this time*, ought to be no object with us. On the contrary, until we have a little time allowed to open and make easy the ways between the Atlantic States and the western territory, the obstructions had better remain. There is nothing which binds one country or one State to another but interest. Without this cement the western inhabitants, who more than probably will be composed in a great degree of foreigners, can have no predilection for us, and a commercial connexion is the only tie we can have upon them. It is clear to me, that the trade of the Lakes, and of the River Ohio, as low as the Great Kenhawa if not to the Falls, may be brought to the Atlantic ports easier and cheaper, taking the whole voyage together, than it can be carried to New Orleans; but, once open the door to the latter before the obstructions are removed from the former, let commercial connexions, which lead to others, be formed, and the habit of that trade be well established, and it will be found to be no easy matter to divert it; and *vice versâ*. When the settlements are stronger and more extended to the westward, the navigation of the Mississippi will be an object of importance, and we shall then be able, reserving our claims, to speak a more efficacious language, than policy, I think, dictates at present.*

* In writing on this subject to M. de Marbois, who had spoken of a rencounter between the Spaniards at Fort Natchez and the inhabitants in that neighbourhood, General Washington said; "I wish something disagreeable may not result from the contentions respecting the navigation of the River Mississippi. The emigration to the waters thereof is

I never have heard, and I hope never shall hear, any serious mention of a paper emission in this State; yet such a thing may be in agitation. Ignorance and design are productive of much mischief. The former is the tool of the latter, and is often set to work suddenly and unexpectedly. Those, with whom I have conversed on the subject in this part of the State, reprobate the idea exceedingly.*

We have lately had the pleasure of Miss Lee's and Miss Hannah's company at this place. They were both well five days ago. Mrs. Washington prays you to accept her compliments; and with sentiments of great respect, esteem, and regard, I am, &c.

P. S. Your name, I well remember, stands among those of the subscribers for a share in the Potomac navigation.

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astonishingly great, and chiefly by a description of people, who are not very subordinate to the laws and constitution of the States they go from. Whether the prohibition of the Spaniards, therefore, is just or unjust, politic or impolitic, it will be with difficulty, that people of this class can be restrained from the enjoyment of natural advantages." — *June 18th.*

* The following question and sentiments were contained in Mr. Lee's letter, to which this is an answer.

"Is it possible that a plan can be formed for issuing a large sum of paper money by the next Assembly? I do verily believe, that the greatest foes we have in the world could not devise a more effectual plan for ruining Virginia. I should suppose, that every friend to his country, every honest and sober man, would join heartily to reprobate so nefarious a plan of speculation."

The sentiments of George Mason on the same subject, may be seen in the following extract from a letter written by him to General Washington at a somewhat later date. "I have heard nothing from the Assembly," said he, "except vague reports of their being resolved to issue a paper currency; upon what principle or funds I know not; perhaps upon the old threadbare security of pledging solemnly the public credit. I believe such an experiment would prove similar to the old vulgar adage of carrying a horse to the water. They may pass a law to issue it, but twenty laws will not make the people receive it." — *November 9th.*

TO JAMES McHENRY, IN CONGRESS.

Mount Vernon, 22 August, 1785.

DEAR SIR,

Your letter of the 1st instant came to this place whilst I was absent on a tour up the river, or an earlier acknowledgment of it should have been sent to you. The enclosure shall, either by this or the next post, be sent to Dr. Gordon for his information, and that justice may be done to a character so deserving American gratitude and the pen of a historian, as the Marquis de Lafayette.*

I am very glad to hear, that Congress are relieved from the embarrassment, which originated with Longchamps. Had the demand of him been persisted in, it might have involved very serious consequences; it is better for the court of France to be a little vexed, than for it to have persevered in the demand of him.

As I have ever been a friend to adequate powers of Congress, without which it is evident to me we never shall establish a national character, or be considered as on a respectable footing by the powers of

* During a part of the war, Mr. McHenry had been one of Lafayette's aids-de-camp, and he had recently drawn up a memoir containing an account of the services of that officer in the United States. General Washington transmitted that memoir to Dr. Gordon, and wrote;

"As I am fully persuaded it is your wish to transmit to posterity a true history of the revolution, and that of course you desire to receive every information, which will enable you to do justice to the principal actors therein, it cannot be unpleasing to you to receive a narrative of unadorned facts, which serves to bring forward circumstances, which, in some measure, may be unknown to you. I therefore make no apology for transmitting the enclosed, nor shall I do more than hint to you the propriety of keeping the Marquis's wishes in this business behind the curtain. Your own good sense must dictate the measure, and furnish the reason for it. The noble, conspicuous, and disinterested part, which this nobleman has acted on the American theatre, deserves all the gratitude this country can render him, and all the eulogy which the pen of a faithful historian can bestow." — *August* 31*st*.

Europe, I am sorry I cannot agree with you in sentiment not to enlarge them for the regulating of commerce. I have neither time nor abilities to enter into a full discussion of this subject; but it would seem to me, that your arguments against it, principally that some States may be more benefited than others by a commercial regulation, apply to every matter of general utility. Can there be a case mentioned, in which this argument has not its force in a greater or less degree? We are either a united people under one head and for federal purposes, or we are thirteen independent sovereignties, eternally counteracting each other. If the former, whatever such a majority of the States, as the constitution points out, conceives to be for the benefit of the whole, should, in my humble opinion, be submitted to by the minority. Let the southern States always be represented; let them act more in union; let them declare freely and boldly what is for the interest of, and what is prejudicial to, their constituents; and there will, there must be, an accommodating spirit. In the establishment of a navigation act, this in a particular manner ought, and will doubtless be attended to. If the assent of nine States, or as some propose of eleven, is necessary to give validity to a commercial system, it insures this measure, or it cannot be obtained.

Wherein then lies the danger? But if your fears are in danger of being realized, cannot certain provisos in the ordinance guard against the evil? I see no difficulty in this, if the southern delegates would give their attendance in Congress, and follow the example, if it should be set them, of adhering together to counteract combinations. I confess to you candidly, that I can foresee no evil greater than disunion; than those unreasonable jealousies, (I say *unreasonable*, because I

would have a *proper* jealousy always awake, and the United States on the watch to prevent individual States from infracting the constitution with impunity,) which are continually poisoning our minds and filling them with imaginary evils for the prevention of real ones.

As you have asked the question, I answer, I do not know that we can enter upon a war of imposts with Great Britain, or any other foreign power; but we are certain, that this war has been waged against us by the former; professedly upon a belief that we never could unite in opposition to it; and I believe there is no way of putting an end to, or at least of stopping the increase of it, but to convince them of the contrary. Our trade, in all points of view, is as essential to Great Britain, as hers is to us; and she will exchange it upon reciprocal and liberal terms, if better cannot be had. It can hardly be supposed, I think, that the carrying business will devolve wholly on the States you have named, or remain long with them if it should; for either Great Britain will depart from her present contracted system, or the policy of the southern States in framing the act of navigation, or by laws passed by themselves individually, will devise ways and means to encourage seamen for the transportation of the products of their respective countries. But, admitting the contrary, if the Union is considered as permanent, and on this I presume all superstructures are built, had we not better encourage seamen among ourselves, with less imports, than divide them with foreigners, and by increasing the amount of them ruin our merchants, and greatly injure the mass of our citizens.

To sum up the whole, I foresee, or think I do, the many advantages which will arise from giving powers of this kind to Congress (if a sufficient number of States are required to exercise them), without any evil,

save that which may proceed from inattention, or want of wisdom in the formation of the act; whilst, without them, we stand in a ridiculous point of view in the eyes of the nations of the world, with whom we are attempting to enter into commercial treaties, without the means of carrying them into effect; who must see and feel, that the Union or the States individually are sovereigns, as best suits their purposes; in a word, that we are one nation to-day and thirteen to-morrow. I will only add, that Mrs. Washington offers her compliments and best wishes for you, and that with great esteem and regard, I am, dear Sir, &c.*

TO WILLIAM GRAYSON, IN CONGRESS.

Mount Vernon, 22 August, 1785.

DEAR SIR,

During my tour up the Potomac River with the directors, to examine and to form a plan for opening and extending the navigation of it, agreeably to the acts of the Virginia and Maryland Assemblies, your favor of the 25th came to this place, with the letters brought by the son of Mr. Adams from France, for your care of which I thank you. *Apropos*, did you hear him say any thing of hounds, which, the Marquis de Lafayette has written to me, were committed to his care? If he really brought them (and if he did not I am unable to account for the information), it would have been civil in the young gentleman to drop me a line respecting the disposal of them; especially as war is declared against the canine species in New York, and they, being

* See the letter, to which the above is an answer, and the propositions on the same subject as discussed in Congress and the legislature of Virginia, in the APPENDIX, No. II.

strangers and not having formed any alliances for self-defence, but on the contrary distressed and friendless, may have been exposed, not only to war, but to pestilence and famine also. If you can say any thing on this subject, pray do so.*

I thank you for the several articles of intelligence contained in your letter, and for the propositions respecting a coinage of gold, silver, and copper; a measure, which, in my opinion, has become indispensably necessary. Mr. Jefferson's ideas upon this subject are plain and simple; well adapted, I think, to the nature of the case, as he has exemplified it by the plan.† Without a coinage, or unless some stop can be put to the cutting and clipping of money, our dollars, pistareens, &c., will be converted, as Teague says, into *five* quarters; and a man must travel with a pair of scales in his pocket, or run the risk of receiving gold at one fourth less by weight than it counts.

I have ever been a friend to adequate congressional powers; consequently I wish to see the ninth article of the confederation amended and extended. Without these powers we cannot support a national character, and must appear contemptible in the eyes of Europe. But to you, my dear Sir, I will candidly confess, that in

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* To this inquiry Mr. Grayson replied. "The hounds arrived here in the midst of a hot war against their fraternity. They were not, however, friendless. Your acquaintance, Dr. Cochran, took very good care of them whilst they remained at this place, and has sent them by Captain Packard's sloop to Mount Vernon." — *September 5th.*

† This plan was the one which has since been carried into use. Mr. Jefferson took the dollar as a *unit*, and then divided it decimally for the other denominations. He wrote a memoir on the subject for the consideration of Congress. — JEFFERSON'S *Writings*, Vol. I. p. 133. A very ingenious scheme had been previously devised by Gouverneur Morris, founded on similar principles; but, as a different *unit* was adopted, the notation was less simple. — SPARKS'S *Life of Gouverneur Morris*, Vol. I. pp. 273-281.

my opinion it is of little avail to give them to Congress. The members seem to be so much afraid of exerting those, which they already have, that no opportunity is slipped of surrendering them, or referring the exercise of them to the States individually. Instance your late ordinance respecting the disposal of the western lands, in which no State with the smallest propriety could have obtruded an interference. No doubt but the information of Congress from the back country is better than mine, respecting the operations of this ordinance; but I have understood from some sensible people, that, besides running they know not where to purchase, the lands are of so versatile a nature, that, to the end of time, they will not, by those who are acquainted therewith, be purchased either in townships or by square miles. This, if I recollect right, was the sentiment I delivered to you, on the first mention of the matter; but past experience, you said, was brought forward in support of the measure, and appealed to for the issue. I submitted therefore to its decision, but still retained my opinion.

We have got the Potomac navigation in hand. Workmen are employed, under the best manager and assistants we could obtain, at the Falls of Shenandoah and Seneca; and I am happy to inform you, that, upon a critical examination of them by the directors, the manager, and myself, we are unanimously of opinion, that the difficulties at these two places do not exceed the expectations we had formed of them; and that the navigation through them might be effected without the aid of locks. How far we may have been deceived with respect to the first, as the water though low may yet fall, I shall not decide; but we are not mistaken, I think, in our conjectures of the other. With very great esteem and regard, I am, &c.

TO ARTHUR ST. CLAIR.

Mount Vernon, 31 August, 1785.

DEAR SIR,

Your favor of the 21st ultimo, enclosing a letter written in behalf of the Society of the Cincinnati in the State of Pennsylvania on the 9th of July in the preceding year, came to this place in my absence on a tour up the river Potomac.

I am perfectly convinced, that, if the first institution of this Society had not been parted with, ere this we should have had the country in an uproar, and a line of separation drawn between this Society and their fellow-citizens. The alterations, which took place at the last general meeting, have quieted the clamors, which in many of the States were rising to a great height; but I have not heard yet of the incorporation of any Society by the State to which it belongs, which is an evidence, in my mind, that the jealousies of the people are rather asleep than removed on this occasion.

I am always made happy when I hear that any of my fellow-laborers have received appointments, that may in some measure compensate them for their past services and losses in the late revolution. I feel it in two respects; first, as it benefits the individual; and next, as it is a testimony of public gratitude. Be assured then, my dear Sir, that your appointment to the office, which you now hold, gave me much pleasure, as I am told the emoluments of it are handsome. My best wishes will ever attend you. With sincere esteem and regard, I am, dear Sir, &c.

TO THE MARQUIS DE LAFAYETTE.

Mount Vernon, 1 September, 1785.

My dear Marquis,

Since my last to you, I have been favored with your letters of the 11th and 13th of May by young Mr. Adams, who brought them to New York, from whence they came safely to this place by the post. The first is a cipher, and for the communications therein contained I thank you. My best wishes will always accompany your undertakings; but remember, my dear friend, it is a part of the military art to reconnoitre and feel your way before you engage too deeply. More is oftentimes effected by regular approaches than by an open assault. From the former, too, you may make a good retreat; from the latter, in case of repulse, it rarely happens.

It is to be hoped, that Mr. Adams will bring the British ministry to some explanation respecting the western posts. Nothing else can, I conceive, disturb the tranquillity of these States; but, if I am mistaken in this conjecture, you know my sentiments and friendship for you too well to doubt my inclination to serve you to the utmost of your wishes and my powers.

It gives me very singular pleasure to find the court of France relaxing in their demand of Longchamps. To have persisted in it would have been a very embarrassing measure to this country, under the laws and constitution of the federal government, and those of the several parts which compose it.*

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* Longchamps was a Frenchman, who in May, 1784, had assaulted M. de Marbois, the French consul-general and secretary of legation, in the streets of Philadelphia, and at the house of the French minister. This act being a violation of the law of nations, Longchamps was arrested, tried by the courts of Pennsylvania, found guilty, and sentenced

The hounds, which you were so obliging as to send, arrived safe, and are of promising appearance. To Monsieur le Comte Doilliamson (if I miscall him, your handwriting is to blame, and in honor you are bound to rectify the error), and in an especial manner to his fair Comtesse, my thanks are due for this favor. The enclosed letter, which I give you the trouble of forwarding, contains my acknowledgment of their obliging attention to me on this occasion.

If I recollect right, the letter, which was written by the Marquis de St. Simon, was on the business of the Cincinnati, and was laid before the general meeting at Philadelphia in May, 1784; consequently the answer must have proceeded from the Society, either especially to him, or generally through the Counts d'Estaing and Rochambeau, who were written to as the heads of the naval and military members of that Society in France. But, as all the papers relative to the business of the Society were deposited in the care of the secretary, General Knox, or the assistant secretary, Williams, I have them not to refer to, but will make inquiry, and will inform you or the Marquis de St. Simon more particularly of the result.

Your constant attention, and unwearied endeavours to serve the interests of these United States, cannot fail to keep alive in them a grateful sensibility, and the affectionate regard of all their citizens for you. The

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to pay a fine of one hundred crowns, and to be imprisoned for a limited time. The sentence was put in execution; but in the mean time the King of France demanded Longchamps as a French subject, and required that he should be sent to France and tried by the laws of his own country. Congress resisted this claim, as inconsistent with the dignity of an independent government, it being the right of every such government to punish all offences committed against the laws within its jurisdiction. For a short time the controversy threatened serious consequences; but the French King relaxed from his demand, Longchamps suffered the penalty inflicted by the judicial tribunal of Pennsylvania, and the difficulty ceased.

footing, on which you have established a market for whale oil, must be equally pleasing and advantageous to the States, which are more immediately engaged in that commerce.

When George* returns from the Springs and gets a little fixed, I will set him about copying your letters to me, which will be better than to hazard the originals at sea, where an accident might occasion the loss of them to both of us. In my last I informed you of his intended marriage, which I suppose will take place in the early part of next month. I am, &c.

TO M. DE MARBOIS.

Mount Vernon, 25 September, 1785.

SIR,

I have had the honor to receive yours of the 14th from New York. At the moment I congratulate you on your late appointment, and this fresh instance of his Most Christian Majesty's attention to your merits, I cannot but express my sorrow that you are so near the eve of your departure from America. I shall remember with pleasure, Sir, the friendship you have always expressed for me, and with gratitude shall recollect the many instances of your partiality and attention towards me. I should receive with great satisfaction the account of your safe arrival at Hispaniola, and of every other event which can be interesting and pleasing to you; being with much truth, and great esteem and regard, Sir, your most obedient, &c.†

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* George Augustine Washington, nephew to General Washington.

† M. de Marbois had been promoted to the office of Intendant of the Island of Hispaniola. He had resided in the United States six years, first as secretary of legation under the Chevalier de la Luzerne, next

TO BENJAMIN FRANKLIN.

Mount Vernon, 25 September, 1785.

DEAR SIR,

Amid the public gratulations on your safe return to America, after a long absence and the many eminent services you have rendered it, for which as a benefited person I feel the obligation, permit an individual to join the public voice in expressing a sense of them; and to assure you, that, as no one entertains more respect for your character, so no one can salute you with more sincerity, or with greater pleasure, than I do on the occasion. With the highest regard and greatest consideration, I am, dear Sir, &c.

TO BENJAMIN FRANKLIN.

Mount Vernon, 26 September, 1785.

DEAR SIR,

I had just written, and was about to put into the hands of Mr. Taylor, a gentleman in the department of the secretary of foreign affairs, the enclosed letter, when I had the honor to receive by post your favor of the 20th instant. I have a grateful sense of the partiality of the French nation towards me, and feel very sensibly the indulgent expression of your letter, which does me great honor.

When it suits M. Houdon to come hither, I will accommodate him in the best manner I am able, and shall endeavour to render his stay as agreeable as I can.* It would give me infinite pleasure to see you.

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as consul-general, and afterwards as Chargé d'Affaires from the court of France.

* In compliance with a request of the Governor of Virginia, Mr. Jef-

At this place I dare not look for it; though to entertain you under my own roof would be doubly gratifying. When or whether I shall ever have the satisfaction of seeing you at Philadelphia is uncertain, as retirement from the public walks of life has not been so productive of leisure and ease as might have been expected. With very great esteem and respect, I am, dear Sir, your most obedient, &c.

TO M. HOUDON.

Mount Vernon, 26 September, 1785.

SIR,

By a letter, which I have lately had the honor to receive from Dr. Franklin at Philadelphia, I am informed of your arrival at that place. Many letters from very respectable characters in France, as well as the Doctor's, inform me of the occasion; for which, though the cause is not of my seeking, I feel the most agreeable and grateful sensations. I wish the object of your mission had been more worthy of the masterly genius of the first statuary in Europe; for thus you are represented to me.

It will give me pleasure, Sir, to welcome you to this seat of my retirement; and whatever I have, or can procure, that is necessary to your purposes, or convenient and agreeable to your wishes, you must freely command, as inclination to oblige you will be

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ferson and Dr. Franklin had engaged M. Houdon in Paris to come to America and take from the life an exact resemblance of General Washington's person, for the purpose of executing the statue that had been ordered to be erected by the Virginia legislature. Some interesting facts on this subject are contained in JEFFERSON'S *Writings*, Vol. I. pp. 232, 248, 249, 253. Houdon crossed the Atlantic in the same vessel with Dr. Franklin.

among the last things in which I shall be found deficient, either on your arrival or during your stay.

With sentiments of esteem, I am, Sir, &c.

TO THOMAS JEFFERSON.

Mount Vernon, 26 September, 1785.

DEAR SIR,

I had the honor to receive your favors of the 10th and 17th of July, which were committed to the care of M. Houdon; but I have not yet had the pleasure to see that gentleman. His instruments and materials, Doctor Franklin informs me, were sent down the Seine; but, not being arrived when the ship left Havre, he was obliged to leave them, and is now busied in supplying himself with others at Philadelphia, with which, when done, he will come to this place. I shall take great pleasure in showing M. Houdon every civility and attention in my power during his stay in this country; for I feel myself under personal obligations to you and Dr. Franklin (as the State of Virginia has done me the honor to direct a statue to be erected to my memory) for having placed the execution in the hands of so eminent an artist, and so worthy a character.

I am very happy to find, that your sentiments respecting the interest the Assembly was pleased to give me in the navigation of the Potomac and James Rivers coincide with my own. I never for a moment entertained an idea of accepting it. The difficulty, with which my mind labored, was how to refuse without giving offence. Ultimately I have it in contemplation to apply the profits arising from the tolls to some public use. In this, if I knew how, I would meet the wishes of the Assembly; but, if I am not able to come at these,

my own inclination leads me to apply them to the establishment of two charity schools, one on each river, for the education and support of poor children, especially the descendants of those, who have fallen in defence of their country.

I can say nothing decisively respecting the western settlement of this State. The inhabitants of Kentucky have held several conventions, and have resolved to apply for a separation; but what may be the final issue of it, is not for me to inform you. Opinions, as far as they have come to my knowledge, are diverse. I have uniformly given it as mine, to meet them upon their own ground, draw the best line and make the best terms we can, and part good friends. After the next session of our Assembly, more may be learned and communicated; and, if you should not receive it through a better channel, I will have the honor to inform you.

I am sorry that I cannot give you full information respecting Bushnell's projects for the destruction of ships. No interesting experiments having been made, and my memory being bad, I may in some measure be mistaken in what I am about to relate. Bushnell is a man of great mechanical powers, fertile in inventions and master of execution. He came to me in 1776, recommended by Governor Trumbull and other respectable characters, who were converts to his plan. Although I wanted faith myself, I furnished him with money and other aids to carry his plan into execution. He labored for some time ineffectually; and, though the advocates for his schemes continued sanguine, he never did succeed. One accident or another always intervened. I then thought, and still think, that it was an effort of genius, but that too many things were necessary to be combined, to expect much from the issue against an enemy, who are always upon guard.

That he had a machine so contrived, as to carry him under water at any depth he chose, and for a considerable time and distance, with an appendage charged with powder, which he could fasten to a ship, and give fire to it in time sufficient for his returning, and by means thereof destroy it, are facts, I believe, which admit of little doubt. But then, where it was to operate against an enemy, it was no easy matter to get a person hardy enough to encounter the variety of dangers, to which he would be exposed; first, from the novelty; secondly, from the difficulty of conducting the machine, and governing it under water, on account of the current; and thirdly, from the consequent uncertainty of hitting the object devoted to destruction, without rising frequently above water for fresh observations, which, when near the vessel, would expose the adventurer to discovery and to almost certain death. To these causes I always ascribed the failure of his plan, as he wanted nothing that I could furnish to insure the success of it. This, to the best of my recollection, is a true state of the case; but Humphreys, if I mistake not, being one of his converts, will be able to give you a more perfect account of it than I have done. With perfect esteem and regard, I have the honor to be, &c.

TO JOHN JAY, SECRETARY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS.

Mount Vernon, 27 September, 1785.

DEAR SIR,

Mr. Taylor presented me the honor of your favor of the 25th ultimo, and gave me the pleasure of hearing that Mrs. Jay, yourself, and family were well when he left New York. Upon your safe return to your native country, after a long absence and the important ser-

vices you have rendered it in many interesting negotiations, I very sincerely congratulate you and your lady. It gave me great pleasure to hear of your late appointment as secretary of the United States for the department of foreign affairs. A happier choice, in my opinion, could not have been made; and I shall always rejoice at any circumstances, that will contribute either to your honor, interest, or convenience.

Having completed his mission, Mr. Taylor returns to you with the proceedings and report of the commissioners, who were sent into New York to inspect the embarkation, which, by the by, was little more than a farce, as they inspected no more property than the British chose they should be witness to the embarkation of.* It will always give me pleasure to hear from you. Mrs. Washington joins me in most respectful compliments, and best wishes for yourself and Mrs. Jay, and I am, dear Sir, yours, &c.

TO GEORGE MASON.

Mount Vernon, 3 October, 1785.

DEAR SIR,

I have this moment received yours of yesterday's date, enclosing a memorial and remonstrance against the Assessment Bill, which I will read with attention. At present I am unable to do it, on account of company. The bill itself I do not recollect ever to have

* A minister from the United States having been recently accredited at the court of St. James, it was determined by Congress to bring before that government the subject of the loss of property by citizens of the United States at the time of the evacuation of New York, particularly that of negroes, who were allowed to embark for Nova Scotia and other places. Mr. Taylor had been sent to Mount Vernon by Mr. Jay to procure copies of important papers relating to this matter.

read; with attention I am certain I never did, but will compare them together.

Although no man's sentiments are more opposed to any kind of restraint upon religious principles than mine are, yet I must confess, that I am not amongst the number of those, who are so much alarmed at the thoughts of making people pay towards the support of that which they profess, if of the denomination of Christians, or declare themselves Jews, Mahometans, or otherwise, and thereby obtain proper relief. As the matter now stands, I wish an assessment had never been agitated, and as it has gone so far that the bill could die an easy death; because I think it will be productive of more quiet to the State, than by enacting it into a law, which in my opinion would be impolitic, admitting there is a decided majority for it, to the disquiet of a respectable minority. In the former case, the matter will soon subside; in the latter, it will rankle and perhaps convulse the State. The dinner-bell rings, and I must conclude with an expression of my concern for your indisposition. Sincerely and affectionately, I am, &c.*

* A bill had been brought into the House of Delegates in December, 1784, and twice read, for establishing a provision for teachers of the Christian religion. By the principles of the bill, a specified tax was to be collected from every person in the commonwealth subject to pay taxes for other purposes; and the money raised by virtue of this act was to be appropriated by the vestries, elders, or directors of each religious society to a provision for a minister or teacher of the gospel of their denomination, or to the providing of places of worship. Quakers and Menonists were to receive the amount collected among themselves, but they were to employ it in promoting their particular mode of worship. When the bill came up for a third reading, on the 24th of December, a motion was made to postpone it till the fourth Thursday in November, and this motion was carried by a vote of forty-five to thirty-eight. Before the time arrived, remonstrances and memorials against it were prepared, and signatures obtained from those who were opposed to the measure. The consequence seems to have been a law of a very different complexion, in the preamble of which religious freedom is asserted in its fullest lati-

TO THE MARQUIS DE LA ROUERIE.

Mount Vernon, 7 October, 1785.

MY DEAR SIR,

Your letter of the 19th of May was brought to this place by M. Houdon, who arrived here the 3d of this month. I delay no time to acknowledge the receipt of it, and to thank you for the several communications you have had the goodness to make. You are too well acquainted with my wishes for every thing, which can promote your interest, honor, or happiness, to suppose that I did not rejoice at the prospect of your being appointed to the command of a corps, which is agreeable to your own inclination, and which suits your talents. Whatever gratifies the former, and favors the latter, I sincerely wish you may enjoy.

At present every thing in America is tranquil, and I trust will long remain so. It is not our interest to seek new broils, and I hope our neighbours will not commence them. It is not a little mysterious, however, that the western posts on the American side of the territorial line should still be possessed by British garrisons. The mystery, it is to be presumed, will soon be explained, as an American minister has been received at the court of London.

I never expect to draw my sword again. I can scarcely conceive the cause, that would induce me to do it; but if, contrary to all expectation, such an event

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tude, and by which it was enacted, "that no man shall be compelled to frequent or support any religious worship, place, or ministry whatsoever, nor shall be enforced, restrained, molested, or otherwise burdened in his body or goods, nor shall otherwise suffer on account of his religious opinions or belief; but that all men shall be free to possess, and by argument to maintain, their opinion in matters of religion, and that the same shall in no wise diminish, enlarge, or affect their civil capacities."—HENING'S *Statutes*, Vol. XII. p. 86.

should take place, I should think it a fortunate circumstance, and myself highly honored, to have it supported by yours. My time is now occupied by rural amusements, in which I have great satisfaction; and my first wish is (although it is against the profession of arms, and would clip the wings of some of your young soldiers, who are soaring after glory,) to see the whole world in peace, and the inhabitants of it as one band of brothers, striving who should contribute most to the happiness of mankind.

Mrs. Washington, thankful for your kind remembrance of her, desires me to present her compliments to you. It is unnecessary to assure you of the high esteem and regard, with which I am, &c.

TO JAMES WARREN.

Mount Vernon, 7 October, 1785.

DEAR SIR,

The assurances of your friendship, after a silence of more than six years, are extremely pleasing to me. Friendships, formed under the circumstances in which ours commenced are not easily eradicated; and I can assure you, that mine has undergone no diminution. Every occasion, therefore, of renewing it will give me pleasure, and I shall be happy at all times to hear of your welfare.

The war, as you have very justly observed, has terminated most advantageously for America, and a fair field is presented to our view; but I confess to you freely, my dear Sir, that I do not think we possess wisdom or justice enough to cultivate it properly. Illiberality, jealousy, and local policy mix too much in all our public councils for the good government of the

Union. In a word, the confederation appears to me to be little more than a shadow without the substance, and Congress a nugatory body, their ordinances being little attended to. To me it is a solecism in politics, indeed it is one of the most extraordinary things in nature, that we should confederate as a nation, and yet be afraid to give the rulers of that nation (who are the creatures of our own making, appointed for a limited and short duration, and who are amenable for every action and may be recalled at any moment, and are subject to all the evils, which they may be instrumental in producing,) sufficient powers to order and direct the affairs of the same. By such policy as this the wheels of government are clogged, and our brightest prospects, and that high expectation, which was entertained of us by the wondering world, are turned into astonishment; and, from the high ground on which we stood, we are descending into the vale of confusion and darkness.

That we have it in our power to become one of the most respectable nations upon earth, admits, in my humble opinion, of no doubt, if we would but pursue a wise, just, and liberal policy towards one another, and keep good faith with the rest of the world. That our resources are ample and increasing, none can deny; but, while they are grudgingly applied, or not applied at all, we give a vital stab to public faith, and shall sink, in the eyes of Europe, into contempt.

It has long been a speculative question among philosophers and wise men, whether foreign commerce is of real advantage to any country; that is, whether the luxury, effeminacy, and corruptions, which are introduced along with it, are counterbalanced by the convenience and wealth which it brings. But the decision of this question is of very little importance to us. We have abundant reason to be convinced, that the spirit

of trade, which pervades these States, is not to be restrained. It behoves us then to establish just principles; and this cannot, any more than other matters of national concern, be done by thirteen heads differently constructed and organized. The necessity, therefore, of a controlling power is obvious; and why it should be withheld is beyond my comprehension.

The Agricultural Society, lately established in Philadelphia, promises extensive usefulness, if its objects are prosecuted with spirit. I wish most sincerely, that every State in the Union would institute similar ones; and that these societies would correspond fully and freely with each other, and communicate to the public all useful discoveries founded on practice, with a due attention to climate, soil, and seasons.

It would afford me great pleasure to go over those grounds in your State, with a mind more at ease than when I travelled them in 1775 and 1776, and to unite in congratulation on the happy change with those characters, who participated the anxious moments we passed in those days, and for whom I entertain a sincere regard; but I do not know whether to flatter myself with the hope of such an enjoyment. The deranged state of my affairs, from an absence and total neglect of them for almost nine years, and a pressure of other matters, allow me little leisure for gratifications of this sort. Mrs. Washington offers her compliments and best wishes to Mrs. Warren, to which be pleased to add those of, dear Sir, yours, &c.

TO PATRICK HENRY, GOVERNOR OF VIRGINIA.

Mount Vernon, 29 October, 1785.

SIR,

Your Excellency having been pleased to transmit to me a copy of the act, appropriating for my benefit certain shares in the companies for opening the navigation of James and Potomac Rivers, I take the liberty of returning to the General Assembly, through your hands, the profound and grateful acknowledgments inspired by so signal a mark of their beneficent intentions towards me. I beg you, Sir, to assure them, that I am filled on this occasion with every sentiment, which can flow from a heart warm with love for my country, sensible to every token of its approbation and affection, and solicitous to testify in every instance a respectful submission to its wishes.

With these sentiments in my bosom, I need not dwell on the anxiety I feel in being obliged in this instance to decline a favor, which is rendered no less flattering by the manner in which it is conveyed, than it is affectionate in itself. In explaining this observation I pass over a comparison of my endeavours in the public service with the many honorable testimonies of approbation, which have already so far overrated and overpaid them; reciting one consideration only, which supersedes the necessity of recurring to any other.

When I was first called to the station, with which I was honored during the late conflict for our liberties, to the diffidence which I had so many reasons to feel in accepting it, I thought it my duty to join a firm resolution to shut my hand against every pecuniary recompense. To this resolution I have invariably adhered, and from it, if I had the inclination, I do not feel at liberty now to depart.

Whilst I repeat, therefore, my fervent acknowledgments to the legislature for their very kind sentiments and intentions in my favor, and at the same time beg them to be persuaded, that a remembrance of this singular proof of their goodness towards me will never cease to cherish returns of the warmest affection and gratitude, I must pray that their act, so far as it has for its object my personal emolument, may not have its effect. But if it should please the General Assembly to permit me to turn the destination of the fund vested in me, from my private emolument, to objects of a public nature, it will be my study in selecting these to prove the sincerity of my gratitude for the honor conferred on me, by preferring such as may appear most subservient to the enlightened and patriotic views of the legislature. With great respect and consideration, I have the honor to be, &c.*

* After this letter had been read, the legislature passed an act withdrawing the donation, and adding, "That the said shares, with the tolls and profits hereafter accruing therefrom, shall stand appropriated to such objects of a public nature, in such manner and under such distributions, as the said George Washington, by deed during his life, or by his last will and testament, shall direct." — HENING's *Statutes*, Vol. XII. p. 44. The letter is printed in the preamble to the statute. In writing to Mr. Madison on the subject, at the time he sent the letter to the governor, he said, "Conceiving it would be better to suggest a wish, than to propose an absolute condition of acceptance, I have so expressed myself to the Assembly; and I shall be obliged to you, not only for information of the result, but (if there is an acquiescence on the part of the country) for your sentiments respecting the appropriations. From what may be said on the occasion, you will learn what will be most pleasing, and of the greatest utility to the public." — *October 29th.*

TO THE MARQUIS DE LAFAYETTE.

Mount Vernon, 8 November, 1785.

MY DEAR MARQUIS,

Having written fully to you about the 1st of September, and nothing having occurred since worth reciting, I should not have given you the trouble of receiving a letter from me at this time, were it not for the good opportunity afforded me by Captain Littlepage, and my desire not to suffer any of your letters to remain long by me unacknowledged.

I have now to thank you for your favors of the 9th and 14th of July; the first by M. Houdon, who stayed no more than a fortnight with me, and to whom, for his trouble and risk in crossing the seas (although I had no agency in the business), I feel myself under personal obligations; the second, giving an account of your intended tour, which, if completed in the time you propose, will exhibit a fresh instance of the celerity of your movements.* My good wishes have attended you through the whole of it; and this letter I hope will find you arrived at Paris in good health.

Doctor Franklin has met with a grateful reception in Pennsylvania. He has again embarked on a troubled ocean; I am persuaded with the best designs, and I wish his purposes may be answered, which undoubtedly are to reconcile the jarring interests of the State. He permitted himself to be nominated for the city of Philadelphia as a counsellor, a step to the chair, which no

* A tour through Prussia and Austria, which was performed by Lafayette during the present year. In a former letter General Washington had said; "My best wishes will accompany you to Potsdam and into the Austrian dominions. As an unobserved spectator I should be glad to peep at the troops of those monarchs at their manœuvrings on a grand field-day; but, as it is among the unattainable things, my philosophy shall supply the place of curiosity, and set my mind at ease." — *July 25th.*

doubt he will fill; but whether to the satisfaction of both parties is a question of some magnitude, and of real importance to himself, at least to his quiet. His grandson shall meet with every civility and attention I can show him, when occasions offer.

Your old aid George has taken to himself the wife of his choice. The honey-moon is not yet passed. When that is over, I will set him about copying your letters. I add no more at present, but the sincere and affectionate regard I bear to you, and in which Mrs. Washington and all here join; as we do in respectful compliments and best wishes for Madame de Lafayette and your little flock. It is unnecessary to tell you how much I am, my dear Marquis, yours, &c.

TO JAMES MADISON.

Mount Vernon, 30 November, 1785.

DEAR SIR,

Receive my thanks for your obliging communications of the 11th. I hear with much pleasure, that the Assembly are engaged seriously in the consideration of the revised laws. A short and simple code in my opinion, though I have the sentiments of some of the gentlemen of the long robe against me, would be productive of happy consequences, and redound to the honor of this or any country, which should adopt it. I hope the resolutions, which were published for the consideration of the House, respecting the reference to Congress for the regulation of a commercial system, will have passed.*

The proposition, in my opinion, is so self-evident, that

* See APPENDIX, No. II.

I confess I am not able to discover wherein lies the weight of objection to the measure. We are either a united people, or we are not so. If the former, let us in all matters of general concern, act as a nation which has a national character to support; if we are not, let us no longer act a farce by pretending to it; for, whilst we are playing a double game, or playing a game between the two, we never shall be consistent or respectable, but may be the dupes of some powers, and the contempt assuredly of all. In any case, it behoves us to provide good militia laws, and to look well to the execution of them; but if we mean by our conduct, that the States shall act independently of each other, it becomes indispensably necessary, for therein will consist our strength and the respectability of the Union.

It is much to be wished that public faith may be held inviolable. Painful is it, even in thought, that attempts should be made to weaken its bands. It is a dangerous experiment. Once slacken the reins, and the power is lost. And it is questionable with me, whether the advocates of the measure foresee all its consequences. It is an old adage, that *honesty is the best policy.* This applies to public as well as private life, to States as well as individuals.

I hope the Port and Assize Bills no longer sleep, but are awakened to a happy establishment. The first, with some alterations, would in my judgment be productive of great good to this country. Without it, the trade thereof, I conceive, will ever labor and languish. With respect to the second, if it institutes a speedier administration of justice, it is equally desirable.

From the complexion of the debates in the Pennsylvania Assembly, it would seem as if that legislature intended their assent to the propositions from the States of Virginia and Maryland, respecting a road to the

Youghiogany, should be on the condition that permission be given by the latter to open a communication between the Chesapeake and Delaware, by the way of the rivers Elk and Christiana; which I am sure will never be obtained, if the Baltimore interest can give effectual opposition. The directors of the Potomac navigation have sent to the delegates of this county, to be laid before the Assembly, a petition (which sets forth the reasons) for relief in the depth of the canals, which it may be found necessary to open at the Great and Little Falls of the river. As public economy and private interest equally prompt the measure, and no possible disadvantage, that we can see, will attend granting the petition, we flatter ourselves no opposition will be given. To save trouble, to expedite the business, and to obtain uniformity without delay, or an intercourse between the two Assemblies on so trifling a matter, we have taken the liberty of sending the draft of a bill to members of both Assemblies, which, if approved, will be found exactly similar. With the greatest esteem and regard, I am, Dear Sir, &c.

TO SAMUEL VAUGHAN.

Mount Vernon, 30 November, 1785.

DEAR SIR,

I have been honored with your favor of the 9th, and have received the pamphlet, which you were so obliging as to send me, entitled *Considerations on the Order of Cincinnatus*, by the Count de Mirabeau. I thank you, my good Sir, for this instance of your attention, but wish you had taken time to peruse it first, as I have not yet had leisure to give it a reading. I thought, as most others seemed to think, that all the

exceptionable parts of that institution had been done away at the last general meeting; but, with those who are disposed to cavil, or who have the itch of writing strongly upon them, nothing can be made to suit their palates. The best way, therefore, to disconcert and defeat them, is to take no notice of their publications. All else is but food for declamation.

There is not, I conceive, an unbiassed mind, that would refuse the officers of the late army the right of associating for the purpose of establishing a fund for the support of the poor and distressed of their fraternity, when many of them, it is well known, are reduced to their last shifts by the ungenerous conduct of their country in not adopting more vigorous measures to render their certificates productive. That charity is all that remains of the original institution, none, who will be at the trouble of examining it, can deny.

I have lately received a letter from Mr. Vaughan (your son) of Jamaica, accompanied by a puncheon of rum, which he informs me was sent by your order as a present to me. Indeed, my dear Sir, you overwhelm me with your favors, and lay me under too many obligations to leave a hope remaining of discharging them. Hearing of the distress, in which that island, with others in the West Indies, is involved by the late hurricane, I have taken the liberty of requesting Mr. Vaughan's acceptance, for his own use, of a few barrels of superfine flour of my own manufacturing. My best respects, in which Mrs. Washington joins, are offered to Mrs. Vaughan, yourself, and family; and with the highest esteem and regard, I am, dear Sir, &c.

TO COUNT DE ROCHAMBEAU.

Mount Vernon, 1 December, 1785.

MY DEAR COUNT,

Your letter of the 2d of June, which you had the goodness to write to me at the moment of your taking leave of the venerable Dr. Franklin, now lies before me; and I read the renewed assurances of your friendship with sentiments of gratitude and pleasure, short of nothing but the satisfaction I should feel at seeing you, and the recollection of the hours in which, toiling together, we formed our friendship, a friendship which I hope will continue as long as we shall continue to be actors on the present theatre.

A man in the vigor of life could not have borne the fatigues of a passage across the Atlantic with more fortitude, and greater ease, than the Doctor did; and since, instead of setting himself down in the lap of ease, which might have been expected from a person of his advanced age, he has again entered upon the bustling scenes of public life, and in the chair of state is endeavouring to reconcile the jarring interests of the citizens of Pennsylvania. If he should succeed, fresh laurels will crown his brow; but it is to be feared, that the task is too great for human wisdom. I have not yet seen the good old man, but have had intercourse with him by letters.

Rumors of war between the Dutch and the Emperor still prevail, and it seems, if newspaper accounts are to be credited, to be near at hand. If this event should take place, more powers must engage in it, and perhaps a general flame will be kindled ere the first is extinguished. America may think herself happy in having the Atlantic for a barrier; otherwise a spark might set her a blazing. At present we are peaceable,

and our governments are acquiring a better tone. Congress, I am persuaded, will soon be vested with greater powers. The commercial interests throughout the Union are exerting themselves to obtain these, and I have no doubt will effect it. We shall be able then, if a commercial treaty is not entered into with Great Britain, to meet her on the restrictive and contracted ground she has taken, and interdict her shipping and trade in the same manner she has done those of these States. This, and this only, will convince her of the illiberality of her conduct towards us; or that her policy has been too refined and overstrained, even for the accomplishment of her own purposes.

Mrs. Washington is thankful for your constant remembrance of her, and joins me in every good wish for you and Madame de Rochambeau.

I have the honor to be, &c.

TO L. W. OTTO.*

Mount Vernon, 5 December, 1785.

SIR,

The letter, which you did me the honor to write to me on the 1st of October, only came to hand the 28th of last month. My particular acknowledgments are due to you for your recollection and attention, and I pray you to be assured of the pleasure I felt at hearing the place lately filled by M. de Marbois, near the sovereignty of these States, was so happily supplied. On this instance of his Most Christian Majesty's attention to your merits, I offer you my sincere congratulations.

For the favorable sentiments entertained of me in

* Successor to M. de Marbois as *Chargé d'Affaires* from the Court of France in the United States.

France, and particularly at the court, all my gratitude is due; but to none in a higher degree than to the Chevalier de la Luzerne, for whom I have the highest esteem and regard. For your obliging offers of service here, or in France, I sincerely thank you; and, at the same time that I give you the trouble of forwarding a few letters, beg you to believe that I am, &c.

TO THE TRUSTEES OF THE ALEXANDRIA ACADEMY.

17 December, 1785.

GENTLEMEN,

That I may be perspicuous and avoid misconception, the proposition which I wish to lay before you is committed to writing, and is as follows.

It has long been my intention to invest, at my death, one thousand pounds current money of this State in the hands of trustees, the interest only of which to be applied in instituting a school in the town of Alexandria, for the purpose of educating orphan children, who have no other resource, or the children of such indigent parents, as are unable to give it; the objects to be considered and determined by the trustees for the time being, when applied to by the parents or friends of the children, who have pretensions to this provision. It is not in my power at this time to advance the above sum; but that a measure, that may be productive of good, may not be delayed, I will until my death, or until it shall be more convenient for my estate to advance the principal, pay the interest thereof, to wit, fifty pounds annually.

Under this state of the matter, I submit to your consideration the practicability and propriety of blending the two institutions together, so as to make one semi-

nary under the direction of the president, visitors, or such other establishment as to you shall seem best calculated to promote the objects in view, and for preserving order, regularity, and good conduct in the academy. My intention, as I have before intimated, is, that the principal sum shall never be broken in upon; the interest only to be applied for the purposes abovementioned. It was also my intention to apply the latter to the sole purpose of education, and of that kind of education, which would be the most extensively useful to people of the lower class of citizens, namely, reading, writing, and arithmetic, so as to fit them for mechanical purposes.

The fund, if confined to this, would comprehend more subjects; but, if you shall be of opinion, that the proposition I now offer can be made to comport with the institution of the school which is already established, and approve of an incorporation of them in the manner before mentioned, and thereafter, upon a full consideration of the matter, should conceive that this fund would be more advantageously applied towards clothing and schooling, than solely to the latter, I will acquiesce in it most cheerfully; and I shall be ready, as soon as the trustees are established upon a permanent footing, by deed or other instrument of writing, to vest the aforesaid sum of one thousand pounds in them and their successors for ever, with powers to direct and manage the same agreeably to these my declared intentions.*

* The above proposal was accepted by the trustees of the Alexandria Academy, who engaged on their part to do all in their power to comply with the benevolent intention of the donor. It was in their opinion best to appropriate the fund to the institution as then established, and wholly for schooling.

TO COUNT DE FLORIDA BLANCA.

Mount Vernon, 19 December, 1785.

SIR,

My homage is due to his Catholic Majesty for the honor of his present. The value of it is intrinsically great; but it is rendered inestimable by the manner, and the hand it is derived from. Let me entreat you, therefore, Sir, to lay before the King my thanks for the jackasses, with which he has been graciously pleased to compliment me; and to assure his Majesty of my unbounded gratitude for this instance of his royal notice and favor. That long life, perfect health, and unfading glory may attend his Majesty's reign, is my fervent wish. With great respect and consideration,

I have the honor to be, &c.*

TO BENJAMIN LINCOLN.

Mount Vernon, 6 February, 1786.

MY DEAR SIR,

Your favor of the 4th of January never reached me till yesterday, or the receipt of it should have had an earlier acknowledgment. Let me, in the first place,

* The King of Spain, hearing that General Washington was endeavouring to procure in Europe jackasses of the best breed, for the purpose of rearing mules on his estates, made him a present of two, and sent over a person with one of them, who was acquainted with the habits of those animals and the mode of treating them, and who arrived at Portsmouth in New Hampshire, and proceeded thence with his charge by land to Mount Vernon. Count de Florida Blanca was the prime minister of Spain. In a complimentary answer to the above letter he said; "It will give pleasure to his Majesty, that opportunities of a higher nature may offer to prove the great esteem he entertains for your Excellency's personal merit, singular virtues, and character."—*St. Ildefonso, September 1st*, 1786.

thank you for your kind attention to my inquiries; and in the next, pray you to know precisely from Mr. Lear upon what terms he would come to me. I am not inclined to leave matters of this kind to after discussion or misconception. Whatever agreement is previously made shall be pointedly fulfilled on my part, which will prevent every cause of complaint on his.

Mr. Lear, or any other who may come into my family in the blended characters of preceptor to the children, and clerk or private secretary to me, will sit at my table, will live as I live, will mix with the company who resort to the house, and will be treated in every respect with civility and proper attention. He will have his washing done in the family, and may have his linen and stockings mended by the maids of it. The duties, which will be required of him, are generally such as appertain to the offices above mentioned. The first will be very trifling, till the children are a little more advanced; and the other will be equally so, as my correspondences decline (which I am endeavouring to effect), and after my accounts and other old matters are brought up. To descend more minutely into his duties I am unable, because occasional matters may call for particular services; but nothing derogatory will be asked or expected. After this explanation of my wants, I request that Mr. Lear will mention the annual sum he will expect for these services, and I will give him a decided answer by the return of the stages, which now carry the mail and travel quickly. A good hand, as well as proper diction, would be a recommendation on account of fair entries, and for the benefit of the children who will have to copy after it.*

* An arrangement was made satisfactory to both parties; and Mr. Lear, a young gentleman from Portsmouth in New-Hampshire, who had recently graduated at Harvard University, went to Mount Vernon

The discovery of extracting fresh water from salt, by a simple process and without the aid of fire, will be of amazing importance to the sons of Neptune, if it is not vitiated or rendered nauseous by the operation, and can be made to answer all the valuable purposes of other fresh water at sea. Every maritime power in the world in this case ought, in my opinion, to offer some acknowledgment to the inventor.* With every sentiment of regard and friendship,

I am, dear Sir, &c.

TO WILLIAM DRAYTON.

Mount Vernon, 25 March, 1786.

SIR,

I feel very sensibly the honor conferred on me, by the "South Carolina Society for promoting and improving Agriculture and other Rural Concerns," by unanimously electing me the first honorary member of that body; and I pray you, Sir, as chairman, to offer my best acknowledgments and thanks for this mark of its attention. To you for the flattering terms in which the desires of the Society have been communicated, my thanks are particularly due.†

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and became General Washington's secretary. He was recommended in strong terms by General Lincoln, President Willard, and other gentlemen of distinction, who were acquainted with his character. An intimacy commenced between General Washington and Mr. Lear, which continued through the life of the former.

* The invention proved less valuable than had been anticipated. It had been described by General Lincoln as holding out a fair prospect of success, but he afterwards wrote; "It is now said little may be expected from the supposed invention for extracting fresh water from salt."

† In communicating to General Washington the above intelligence, Mr. Drayton added; "This mark of their respect, the Society thought, was with peculiar propriety due to the man, who, by his gallantry and

It is much to be wished, that every State in the Union would establish a society similar to this; and that these societies would correspond with each other, and fully and regularly impart the result of the experiments actually made in husbandry, together with such other useful discoveries as have stood, or are likely to stand, the test of investigation. Nothing, in my opinion, would contribute more to the welfare of these States, than the proper management of lands; and nothing, in this State particularly, seems to be less understood. The present mode of cropping practised among us is destructive to landed property, and must, if persisted in much longer, ultimately ruin the holders of it. I have the honor to be, &c.

TO HENRY LEE, IN CONGRESS.*

Mount Vernon, 5 April, 1786.

MY DEAR SIR,

My sentiments with respect to the federal government are well known. Publicly and privately have they been communicated without reserve; but my opinion is, that there is more wickedness than ignorance in the conduct of the States, or, in other words, in the conduct of those who have too much influence in the government of them; and until the curtain is withdrawn, and the private views and selfish principles, upon which these men act, are exposed to public notice,

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conduct as a soldier, contributed so eminently to stamp a value on the labors of every American farmer; and who, by his skill and industry in the cultivation of his fields, has likewise distinguished himself as a farmer." — *Charleston, November 23d*, 1785.

* Formerly Colonel Henry Lee of the army, and now a delegate in Congress from Virginia.

I have little hope of amendment without another convulsion.

The picture of our affairs as drawn by the committee, approved by Congress, and presented to the public, did not at all surprise me.* Before that report, though I could not go into the minutiæ of matters, I was more certain of the aggregate of our† , than I am now of the remedy, which will be applied. Without the latter, I do not see upon what ground your agent at the court of Morocco, and the other at Algiers, are to treat, unless, having to do with new hands, they mean to touch the old strings, and make them dance awhile to the tune of promises. I thank you for the pamphlet, which contains the correspondence between Mr. Jay and Mr. Littlepage, and shall be obliged to you for a gazette containing the publication of the letter, which appears to have given rise to them. I am, &c.

TO BENJAMIN LINCOLN.

Mount Vernon, 10 April, 1786.

MY DEAR SIR,

The violent rains and consequent freshets have given such interruption to the stages in this part of the world, that your favor of the 15th ultimo did not reach my hands till Saturday last. I accede to the pecuniary allowance of two hundred dollars per annum required

* See *Journals of Congress, February 3d, 7th, and 15th*, 1786. "Our federal distresses," said Mr. Lee, "gather fast to a point. New Jersey has refused the requisition, and will not grant a shilling till New York accedes to the impost. Perhaps this intemperance in Jersey may bring this State to acquiesce in a system of finance long ago approved by ten States, and whose operation might have saved the difficulties, which impend over the Union."—*New York, March 2d.*

† Blank in the original.

by Mr. Lear, in addition to the stipulations mentioned in my last, as a compensation for his services, and shall be glad to receive him into my family as soon as he can make it convenient to repair to it. At any rate, I shall be glad to know, as nearly as may be, when to expect him, that I may arrange matters accordingly. There can be little doubt of Mr. Lear's finding, by method and management, more than the time he speaks of for study; to facilitate, rather than impede which, would give me pleasure, as far as it can be made to comport with the purposes for which he is employed. With the greatest esteem and regard,

I am, &c.

TO ROBERT MORRIS.

Mount Vernon, 12 April, 1786.

DEAR SIR,

I give you the trouble of this letter at the instance of Mr. Dalby of Alexandria, who is called to Philadelphia to attend what he conceives to be a vexatious lawsuit respecting a slave of his, whom a society of Quakers in the city, formed for such purposes, have attempted to liberate. The merits of this case will no doubt appear upon trial. From Mr. Dalby's state of the matter, it should seem, that this society is not only acting repugnantly to justice, so far as its conduct concerns strangers, but in my opinion impoliticly with respect to the State, the city in particular, without being able, except by acts of tyranny and oppression, to accomplish its own ends. He says the conduct of this society is not sanctioned by law. Had the case been otherwise, whatever my opinion of the law might have been, my respect for the policy of the State would on

this occasion have appeared in my silence; because against the penalties of promulgated laws one may guard, but there is no avoiding the snares of individuals, or of private societies. If the practice of this society, of which Mr. Dalby speaks, is not discountenanced, none of those, whose *misfortune* it is to have slaves as attendants, will visit the city if they can possibly avoid it; because by so doing they hazard their property, or they must be at the expense (and this will not always succeed) of providing servants of another description.

I hope it will not be conceived from these observations, that it is my wish to hold the unhappy people, who are the subject of this letter, in slavery. I can only say, that there is not a man living, who wishes more sincerely than I do to see a plan adopted for the abolition of it; but there is only one proper and effectual mode by which it can be accomplished, and that is by legislative authority; and this, as far as my suffrage will go, shall never be wanting.* But when slaves, who are happy and contented with their present masters, are tampered with and seduced to leave them; when masters are taken unawares by these practices; when a conduct of this kind begets discontent on one side and resentment on the other; and when it happens to fall on a man, whose purse will not measure with that of the society, and he loses his property for want of means to defend it; it is oppression in such a case, and not humanity in any, because it introduces more evils than it can cure.

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* In writing to Mr. John F. Mercer on this subject, General Washington said; "I never mean, unless some particular circumstances should compel me to it, to possess another slave by purchase, it being among my first wishes to see some plan adopted, by which slavery in this country may be abolished by law." — *September 9th*, 1786.

I will make no apology for writing to you on this subject, for, if Mr. Dalby has not misconceived the matter, an evil exists which requires a remedy; if he has, my intentions have been good, though I may have been too precipitate in this address. Mrs. Washington joins me in every good and kind wish for Mrs. Morris and your family, and I am, &c.

TO THE MARQUIS DE LAFAYETTE.

Mount Vernon, 10 May, 1786.

MY DEAR MARQUIS,

The account given of your tour through Prussia and other States of Germany to Vienna and back, and of the troops that you saw reviewed, in the pay of those monarchs, at different places, is not less pleasing than it is interesting, and must have been as instructive as entertaining to yourself. Your reception at the courts of Berlin, Vienna, and elsewhere, must have been gratifying to you. To be received by the King of Prussia, and Prince Henry his brother, (who, as soldiers and politicians, yield the palm to none,) with such marks of attention and distinction, was as indicative of their discernment, as it is of your merit, and will increase my opinion of them. It is to be lamented, however, that great characters are seldom without a blot. That one man should tyrannize over millions will always be a shade in that of the former, whilst it is pleasing to hear that a due regard to the rights of mankind is characteristic of the latter. I shall revere and love him for this trait of his character.

To view the several fields of battle, over which you passed, could not, among other sensations, have failed to excite this thought; "Here have fallen thou-

sands of gallant spirits to satisfy the ambition of their sovereigns, or to support them perhaps in acts of oppression and injustice! Melancholy reflection! For what wise purpose does Providence permit this? Is it as a scourge to mankind, or is it to prevent them from becoming too populous? If the latter, would not the fertile plains of the western world receive the redundancy of the old?" *

For the several articles of intelligence with which you have been so good as to furnish me, and for your sentiments on European politics, I feel myself very much obliged. On these I can depend. Newspaper accounts are too sterile, vague, and contradictory, on which to form any opinion or to claim even the smallest attention.

The observations you have made on the policy and practice of Great Britain at other courts of Europe, respecting these States, I was but too well informed and convinced of before. Unhappily for us, though their accounts are greatly exaggerated, yet our conduct has laid the foundation for them. It is one of the evils of democratical governments, that the people, not always seeing and frequently misled, must often feel before they can act right; but then evils of this nature seldom fail to work their own cure. It is to be lamented, nevertheless, that the remedies are so slow, and that those, who may wish to apply them seasonably, are not attended to before they suffer in person, in interest, and in reputation. I am not without hopes, that matters will take a more favorable turn in the federal constitution. The discerning part of the community have long since seen the necessity of giving adequate pow-

* A description of this tour by Lafayette is contained in a letter from him to Mr. Jay. See *Diplomatic Correspondence*, Vol. X. p. 53.

ers to Congress for national purposes, and the ignorant and designing must yield to it ere long. Several late acts of the different legislatures have a tendency thereto. Among these the impost, which is now acceded to by every State in the Union, though clogged a little by that of New York, will enable Congress to support the national credit in pecuniary matters better than it has been; whilst a measure, in which this State has taken the lead at its last session, will, it is to be hoped, give efficient powers to that body for all commercial purposes. This is a nomination of some of its first characters to meet other commissioners from the several States, in order to consider and decide upon such powers, as shall be necessary for the sovereign authority of them to act under; which are to be reported to the respective legislatures at their autumnal sessions, for, it is to be hoped, final adoption; thereby avoiding those tedious and futile deliberations, which result from recommendations and partial concurrences, at the same time that it places it at once in the power of Congress to meet European nations upon decisive and equal grounds. All the legislatures, which I have heard from, have come into the proposition, and have made very judicious appointments.* Much good is expected from this measure, and it is regretted by many, that more objects were not embraced by the meeting. A general convention is talked of by many for the purpose of revising and correcting the defects

* This convention met at Annapolis in September, 1786. Five States only were represented, and when the members came together, they found themselves invested with such limited powers, as not to enable them to act for the general purposes of the meeting. They did little else than to draw up a report, to be presented to the several States, urging the necessity of a revision of the confederated system of government, and recommending a convention of delegates with larger powers to be held at Philadelphia on the 2d of May following.

of the federal government; but, whilst this is the wish of some, it is the dread of others, from an opinion that matters are not yet sufficiently ripe for such an event.

The British still occupy our posts to the westward, and will, I am persuaded, continue to do so under one pretence or another, no matter how shallow, as long as they can. Of this, from some circumstances which had occurred, I have been convinced since August, 1783, and gave it as my opinion at that time, if not officially to Congress as the sovereign, at least to a number of its members, that they might act accordingly. It is indeed evident to me, that they had it in contemplation to do this at the time of the treaty. The expression of the article, which respects the evacuation of them, as well as the tenor of their conduct since relative to this business, is strongly marked with deception. I have not the smallest doubt, but that every secret engine is continually at work to inflame the Indian mind, with a view to keep it at variance with these States, for the purpose of retarding our settlements to the westward, and depriving us of the fur and peltry trade of that country.

The benevolence of your heart, my dear Marquis, is so conspicuous upon all occasions, that I never wonder at any fresh proofs of it; but your late purchase of an estate in the colony of Cayenne, with a view of emancipating the slaves on it, is a generous and noble proof of your humanity.* Would to God a like spirit might diffuse itself generally into the minds of the people of this country. But I despair of seeing it. Some peti-

* In a remarkable and very interesting letter, written by Lafayette in the prison of Magdeburg, he said; "I know not what disposition has been made of my plantation at Cayenne, but I hope Madame de Lafayette will take care, that the negroes, who cultivate it, shall preserve their liberty."—SPARKS'S *Life of Gouverneur Morris*, Vol. I. p. 410.

tions were presented to the Assembly, at its last session, for the abolition of slavery, but they could scarcely obtain a reading. To set the slaves afloat at once would, I really believe, be productive of much inconvenience and mischief; but by degrees it certainly might, and assuredly ought to be effected; and that too by legislative authority.

I give you the trouble of a letter to the Marquis de St. Simon, in which I have requested to be presented to M. de Menonville. The favorable terms in which you speak of Mr. Jefferson give me great pleasure. He is a man of whom I early imbibed the highest opinion. I am as much pleased, therefore, to meet confirmations of my discernment in these matters, as I am mortified when I find myself mistaken.

I send herewith the copies of your private letters to me, promised in my last, and which have been since copied by your old aid. As Mrs. Washington and myself have both done ourselves the honor of writing to Madame de Lafayette, I shall not give you the trouble at this time of presenting my respects to her, but pray you to accept every good wish, which this family can render for your health, and every blessing this life can afford you. I cannot conclude without expressing to you the earnest inquiries and ardent wishes of your friends (among whom I claim to stand the first) to see you in America, and giving you repeated assurances of the sincerity of my friendship, and of the affectionate regard with which I am, &c.

P. S. I had like to have forgotten a promise, which I made in consequence of the enclosed application from Colonel Carter. It was, that I would write to you for the wolf-hound, if to be had conveniently. The inducements, and the services you would render by

this act, will be more evident from the expressions of the letter, than from any thing I can say.

The vocabulary for her Imperial Majesty I will use my best endeavours to have completed, but she must have a little patience. The Indian tribes on the Ohio are numerous, dispersed, and distant from those, who are most likely to do the business properly.

TO THE MARCHIONESS DE LAFAYETTE.

Mount Vernon, 10 May, 1786.

MADAM,

The tokens of regard, with which Miss de Lafayette and my namesake* honored the young folks of this family, will cement the friendship, which seems to be rising in their tender breasts, and will increase those flames of it, which they have imbibed from their parents, to which nothing can add strength but the endearments that flow from personal interviews, and the unreserved exchange of liberal sentiments. Will you not then, Madam, afford them this opportunity? May we hope for it soon? If the assurances of the sincerest esteem and affection, if the varieties of uncultivated nature, the novelty of exchanging the gay and delightful scenes of Paris, with which you are surrounded, for the rural amusements of a country in its infancy, if the warbling notes of the feathered songsters on our lawns and meads, can for a moment make you forget the melody of the opera and the pleasures of the court, these all invite you to give us this honor, and the opportunity of expressing to you personally those sentiments of attachment and love, with which you have inspired us.

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* George Washington Lafayette.

The noontide of life is now passed with Mrs. Washington and myself; and all we have to do is to spend the evening of our days in tranquillity, and glide gently down a stream, which no human effort can ascend. We must, therefore, however reluctantly it is done, forego the pleasure of such a visit as you kindly invite us to make. But the case with you is far otherwise. Your days are in their meridian brightness. In the natural order of things, you have many years to come, in which you may indulge yourself in all the amusements, which variety can afford and different countries produce, and in receiving those testimonies of respect, which every one in the United States would wish to render to you.

My mother will receive the compliments you honor her with, as flattering marks of attention; and I shall have great pleasure in delivering them myself. My best wishes and vows are offered for you, and for the fruits of your love; and with every sentiment of respect and attachment, I have the honor to be, Madam, &c.

TO JOHN JAY.

Mount Vernon, 18 May, 1786.

DEAR SIR,

In due course of post, I have been honored with your favors of the 2d and 16th of March;* since which I have been a good deal engaged and pretty much from home. For the enclosure, which accompanied the first, I thank you. Mr. Littlepage seems to have forgotten what had been his situation, forgotten what was due to you, and indeed what was necessary

* See *Life of John Jay*, Vol. I. p. 242.

to his own character; and his guardian, I think, seems to have forgotten every thing.*

I coincide perfectly in sentiment with you, my dear Sir, that there are errors in our national government, which call for correction; loudly, I would add; but I shall find myself happily mistaken if the remedies are at hand. We are certainly in a delicate situation; but my fear is, that the people are not yet sufficiently *misled* to retract from error. To be plainer, I think there is more wickedness than ignorance mixed in our councils. Under this impression I scarcely know what opinion to entertain of a general convention. That it is necessary to revise and amend the articles of confederation, I entertain no doubt; but what may be the consequences of such an attempt is doubtful. Yet something must be done, or the fabric must fall, for it is certainly tottering.

Ignorance and design are difficult to combat. Out of these proceed illiberal sentiments, improper jealousies, and a train of evils which oftentimes in republican governments must be sorely felt before they can be removed. The former, that is ignorance, being a fit soil for the latter to work in, tools are employed which a generous mind would disdain to use; and which nothing but time, and their own puerile or wicked productions, can show the inefficacy and dangerous tendency of. I think often of our situation, and view it with concern. From the high ground we stood upon, from the plain path which invited our footsteps, to be so fallen, so lost, is really mortifying. But virtue, I fear, has in a great degree taken its departure from our land, and the want of a disposition to do justice is the

* This subject appears to have been made a matter of much more public importance than its merits deserved. It is fully explained in the *Life of John Jay*, Vol. I. pp. 204 – 229.

source of the national embarrassments; for, whatever guise or coloring is given to them, this I apprehend is the origin of the evils we now feel, and probably shall labor under for some time yet. With respectful compliments to Mrs. Jay, and sentiments of sincere friendship, I am, dear Sir, &c.

TO JAMES TILGHMAN.

Mount Vernon, 5 June, 1786.

DEAR SIR,

I have just had the pleasure to receive your letter of the 26th ultimo. Of all the numerous acquaintances of your lately deceased son, and amidst all the sorrowings, which are mingled on the occasion, I may venture to assert, that, excepting his nearest relatives, none could have felt his death with more regret than I did, because no one entertained a higher opinion of his worth, or had imbibed sentiments of greater friendship for him, than I had done.

That you, Sir, should have felt the keenest anguish for the loss I can readily conceive. The ties of parental affection, united with those of friendship, could not fail to produce this effect. It is however a dispensation, the wisdom of which is inscrutable; and, amidst all your grief, there is this consolation to be drawn, that while living, no man could be more esteemed, and since dead, none more lamented, than Colonel Tilghman.*

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* Colonel Tench Tilghman had been an aid to General Washington during a large part of the war, and had acquired in an unusual degree his confidence and esteem. He died after a short illness at Baltimore. Among the Mount Vernon Papers I find the following inscription in manuscript.

"Beneath this Stone are laid the Remains of a Good Man, Colonel

As his correspondence with the committee of New York is not connected with any transactions of mine, so consequently it is not necessary that the papers, to which you allude, should compose part of my public documents; but, if they stand single, as they exhibit a trait of his public character, and, like all the rest of his transactions, will, I am persuaded, do honor to his understanding and probity, it may be desirable in this point of view to keep them alive by mixing them with mine, which undoubtedly will claim the attention of the historian; who, if I mistake not, will upon an inspection of them discover the illiberal ground on which the charge, mentioned in the extract from the letter you did me the honor to enclose, is founded. That a calumny of this kind had been reported, I knew. I had laid my account for the calumnies of anonymous scribblers; but I never before had conceived, that such a one as is related could have originated with, or met the countenance of Captain Asgill, whose situation often filled me with the keenest anguish. I felt for him on many accounts; and not the least, when, viewing him as a man of honor and sentiment, I considered how unfortunate it was for him, that a wretch, who possessed neither, should be the means of causing in him a single pang, or a disagreeable sensation. My favorable opin-

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Tench Tilghman, who died April the 18th, 1786, in the 43d Year of his Age. He took an early and active part in the great contest, that secured the Independence of the United States of America. He was aid-de-camp to his Excellency General Washington, Commander-in-chief of the American Armies, and was honored with his friendship and confidence; and he was one of those, whose merits were distinguished and honorably rewarded by the Congress."

Several of General Washington's correspondents spoke of his death with much warmth of feeling. Robert Morris said; "You have lost in him a most faithful and valuable friend. He was to me the same. I esteemed him very, very much, and I lament his loss exceedingly."—*April 26th.*

ion of him, however, is forfeited, if, being acquainted with these reports, he did not immediately contradict them. That I could not have given countenance to the insults, which *he says* were offered to his person, especially the grovelling one of erecting a gibbet before his prison window, will, I expect, readily be believed, when I explicitly declare, that I never heard of a single attempt to offer an insult, and that I had every reason to be convinced, that he was treated by the officers around him with all the tenderness and every civility in their power.

I would fain ask Captain Asgill, how he could reconcile such a belief, if his mind had been seriously impressed with it, to the continual indulgences and procrastinations he had experienced? He will not, I presume, deny, that he was admitted to his parole within ten or twelve miles of the British lines; if not to a formal parole, to a confidence yet more unlimited, by being permitted, for the benefit of his health and the recreation of his mind, to ride, not only about the cantonment, but into the surrounding country for many miles, with his friend and companion, Major Gordon, constantly attending him. Would not these indulgences have pointed a military character to the fountain from which they flowed. Did he conceive, that discipline was so lax in the American army, as that *any* officer in it would have granted these liberties to a person confined by the express order of the Commander-in-chief, unless authorized to do so by the same authority? To ascribe them to the interference of Count de Rochambeau is as void of foundation as his other conjectures; for I do not recollect that a sentence ever passed between that general and me, directly or indirectly, on the subject.

I was not without suspicions, after the final liberation

and return of Captain Asgill to New York, that his mind had been improperly impressed, or that he was defective in politeness.

The treatment he had met with, in my conception, merited an acknowledgment. None, however, was offered, and I never sought for the cause.

This concise account of the treatment of Captain Asgill is given from a hasty recollection of the circumstances. If I had time, and it was essential, by unpacking my papers and recurring to authentic files, I might have been more pointed and full. It is in my power at any time to convince the unbiassed mind, that my conduct through the whole of this transaction was neither influenced by passion, guided by inhumanity, nor under the control of any interference whatsoever. I essayed every thing to save the innocent and bring the guilty to punishment. With what success, the impartial world must and hereafter certainly will decide. With very great esteem and regard,

I am, &c.*

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* In Mr. Tilghman's letter, to which the above was an answer, was enclosed an extract from another, written by a respectable gentleman in London, and containing an account of conversations of Captain Asgill, and his complaints of being cruelly treated while a prisoner, awaiting the result of the inquiry respecting the murder of Captain Huddy. General Washington felt the injustice and illiberality of such conduct the more forcibly, as he was conscious of having exercised the greatest tenderness towards Captain Asgill, and of having allowed him indulgences, which, under the circumstances of the case, he could have no reason to demand or even expect. This is now abundantly proved by the letters on the subject, which are contained in the present work. It was properly estimated by Asgill himself at the time. "I cannot conclude," said he, in a letter to General Washington, "without expressing my gratitude to your Excellency for ordering Colonel Dayton to favor me as much as my situation would admit of; and in justice to him, I must acknowledge the feeling and attentive manner in which those commands were executed." — *Chatham, May 17th*, 1782. The principal papers relative to this matter were selected by Colonel Humphreys, and published soon after the complaints or charges of Asgill were promulgated. See *Columbian Magazine for January*, 1787.

TO HENRY LEE, IN CONGRESS.

Mount Vernon, 18 June, 1786.

My dear Sir,

The advantages, with which the inland navigation of the Rivers Potomac and James are pregnant, must strike every mind that reasons upon the subject; but there is, I perceive, a diversity of sentiment respecting the benefits and the consequences, which may flow from the free and immediate use of the Mississippi. My opinion of this matter has been uniformly the same; and no light in which I have been able to consider the subject is likely to change it. It is, neither to relinquish nor to push our claim to this navigation, but in the mean while to open *all* the communications, which nature has afforded, between the Atlantic States and the western territory, and to encourage the use of them to the utmost. In my judgment it is a matter of very serious concern to the well-being of the former to make it the interest of the latter to trade with them; without which, the ties of consanguinity, which are weakening every day, will soon be no bond, and we shall be no more a few years hence to the inhabitants of that country, than the British and Spaniards are at this day; not so much, indeed, because commercial connexions, it is well known, lead to others, and united are difficult to be broken. These must take place with the Spaniards, if the navigation of the Mississippi is opened.

Clear I am, that it would be for the interest of the western settlers, as low down the Ohio as the Big Kenhawa, and back to the Lakes, to bring their produce through one of the channels I have named; but the way must be cleared, and made easy and obvious to them, or else the ease with which people glide down streams will give a different bias to their thinking and

acting. Whenever the new States become so populous and so extended to the westward, as really to need it, there will be no power which can deprive them of the use of the Mississippi. Why then should we prematurely urge a matter, which is displeasing and may produce disagreeable consequences, if it is our interest to let it sleep? It may require some management to quiet the restless and impetuous spirits of Kentucky, of whose conduct I am more apprehensive in this business, than I am of all the opposition that will be given by the Spaniards.* With great esteem and regard,

I am, dear Sir, &c.

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* Opinions in Congress, it would seem, were various on this subject. If we may judge, however, from Mr. Lee's reply to the above, the general voice in that body was not for insisting on the navigation of the Mississippi as a necessary requisite in a treaty with Spain. "Your reasoning," said he, "is perfectly conformable to the prevalent doctrine on that subject in Congress. We are very solicitous to form a treaty with Spain for commercial purposes. Indeed no nation in Europe can give us conditions so advantageous to our trade as that kingdom. The carrying business they are like ourselves in, and this common source of difficulty in adjusting commercial treaties between other nations, does not apply to America and Spain. But, my dear General, I do not think you go far enough. Rather than defer longer a free and liberal system of trade with Spain, why not agree to the exclusion of the Mississippi? This exclusion will not, cannot, exist longer than the infancy of the western emigrants. Therefore, to those people, what is now done cannot be important. To the Atlantic States it is highly important; for we have no prospect of bringing to a conclusion our negotiations with the court of Madrid, but by yielding the navigation of the Mississippi. Their minister here is under positive instructions on that point. In all other arrangements the Spanish monarch will give to the States testimonies of his regard and friendship. And I verily believe, that, if the above difficulty should be removed, we should soon experience the advantages, which would flow from a connexion with Spain." — *July 3d.*

TO NICHOLAS PIKE.

Mount Vernon, 20 June, 1786.

SIR,

Your letter of the 25th of March did not come to hand till lately, or it should have had an earlier acknowledgment. It gives me the highest satisfaction to find the arts and sciences making a progress in any country, but when I see them advancing in the rising States of America, I feel a peculiar pleasure. In my opinion every effort of genius, and all attempts towards improving useful knowledge, ought to meet with encouragement in this country. Your performance is of the most useful kind, and from the opinion of those gentlemen, who have inspected it, I have not the least doubt but that it is a very valuable one.*

I feel a very grateful sense of the honor, which you designed me by wishing to dedicate your book to me, and would even sacrifice my own ideas of propriety respecting the matter, so far as to comply with your request, if I thought, that, by a non-compliance, I should discourage so good a work. But, Sir, as there are several characters in your part of the country, who deservedly hold a high rank in the literary world, and whose names would add dignity to such a performance, it would be more proper, if I might presume to offer my opinion on the subject, to dedicate your book to them. I must therefore beg leave to decline the honor, which you would do me, as I have before done in two or three cases of a similar kind. With the sincerest wishes for the success of your work, and with much esteem, I am, Sir, &c.

* Its title was *A Complete System of Arithmetic*, a work much approved in its day, and which held a conspicuous place for many years in the counting-houses and principal schools.

TO GEORGE WILLIAM FAIRFAX.

Mount Vernon, 25 June, 1786.

MY DEAR SIR,

Your conjectures respecting the fate of our letters are, I am persuaded, too well founded. Such frequent miscarriages would not result from negligence alone. But why, after the prying eye of curiosity, or the malignant hope of trepanning an individual or making useful discoveries, were disappointed, the letters should not have been permitted to proceed to their address, is not easily to be conceived. Being well apprized of the delicacy of your situation, I have studiously avoided every expression in all my letters, which might if known involve you in the smallest difficulty or embarrassment.* It is wantonly unfeeling, therefore, to destroy as well as to have inspected those, which were founded in friendship only, and have the occurrences which relate to the parties for their basis. In future I will always place my letters to you under cover to Mr. Athawes.

I have already informed you, that Mr. Pine's reception in this country has been favorable, and indicative of a profitable harvest in the line of his profession. In consequence of your good report of this gentleman, I furnished him with letters to many of the first characters in Philadelphia and Annapolis, and have every reason to believe, that his success will be at least equal to his expectations, if it is not injured by any act of his own; against which his prudence will no doubt guard him.

Though envy is no part of my composition, yet the picture you have drawn of your present habitation

* Mr. Fairfax went to England before the war, and had never returned, nor taken any part in political affairs, though he was friendly to the American cause.